Cease and Desist Letter Sent to Businesses for Selling Phony COVID-19 Protection Patch
Price-gouging Complaints Near 1,600

LANSING, MICH. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel this morning sent a cease and desist letter to two related Rockford-based businesses for marketing to consumers the “Coronavirus Defender Patch,” which the companies falsely claim will help protect people from contracting the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Meanwhile, price-gouging complaints related to COVID-19 filed with the Attorney General’s office are nearing 1,600.

The businesses, Frequency Apps Corp. and Biores Technologies Inc., claim the patch will “help aid the immune system to defend itself against exposure to the virus,” and “can help lessen the effect of the virus if you already have” it. The patch was priced at $49.99, but the companies stated that consumers could receive a 30-day supply of the patch for free when they buy a 45-day supply of any patches the companies sell.

“Providing consumers with a false sense of security that these patches could somehow protect them from this virus is simply wrong,” Nessel said. “I will not tolerate deceptive and misleading business practices at any time, but especially not during this time of uncertainty surrounding Michigan’s battle with COVID-19.”

The companies are likely in violation of the Michigan Consumer Protection Act because they may be:

- Representing that goods or services have sponsorship, approval, characteristics, ingredients, uses, benefits or quantities that they do not have, or that a person has sponsorship, approval, status, affiliation or connection that he or she does not have.
- Failing to reveal a material fact, the omission of which tends to mislead or deceive the consumer, and which fact could not reasonably be known by the consumer.
- Causing coercion and duress as the result of the time and nature of a sales presentation.
- Making a representation of fact or statement of fact material to the transaction such that a person reasonably believes the represented or suggested state of affairs to be other than it actually is.
The companies have 10 days to respond to the letter by agreeing to not market or sell the patches to Michigan consumers and to provide contact information for all consumers who purchased the patches.

As of 7 a.m. today, the Attorney General’s office had received a total of 1,578 complaints of price-gouging related to COVID-19, which includes 649 complaints filed electronically through the office’s Consumer Protection website and 929 complaints taken by telephone.

A total of 97 price-gouging complaints were received by phone Monday out of 169 calls to the Consumer Protection tip line. Calls may pertain to topics other than COVID-19-related price-gouging.

The Consumer Protection tip line usually receives around 80 phone calls daily. However, between March 16 and Friday, the intake team received an average of 280 calls per day – though there were extended hours of operation in place last week.

Consumers can file a complaint online or by calling the Consumer Protection tip line, 877-765-8388. Hours of operation are between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at Michigan.gov/Coronavirus and CDC.gov/Coronavirus.

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