Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC)
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TLP:GREEN

WSIC Analytic Report

February 4, 2021

The Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center (WSIC) has developed this intelligence product based on information from multiple trusted third parties. If you have information or suggestions for future products, please e-mail wsic@doj.state.wi.us

TLP:GREEN Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community, but not via publicly accessible channels. For further information on the traffic light protocol, please see https://www.us-cert.gov/tlp[i]

Fraud Calls Targeting the Medical Sector in Wisconsin, Nationwide

Overview:

Since December 2020 the Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center has received four reports of medical providers in Wisconsin receiving fraudulent phone calls claiming to originate with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS), and / or the Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA). Fortunately, in each case the call recipients were skeptical of the calls, eventually hung up, and suffered no financial loss because of the scam. None of the calls reported to WSIC were legitimate outreach from either DSPS or WNA[ii,iii]. A recent FBI Liaison Information Report details similar activity occurring nationwide[iv].

Details:

While the specifics of the calls vary, generally the scammer claims to be from a legitimate organization, confirms the identity and National Provider Identifier (NPI) for the intended victim, and then transfers the call to an "investigator". The "investigator" claims that the intended victim's professional license has been suspended due to an ongoing criminal investigation, that they must immediately leave work and cooperate with the investigation, or risk being arrested. The intended victim may be told they are the victim of identity theft, or that their co-workers are suspects in the investigation, so they cannot consult anyone else, including staff attorneys[v].

In two of the four cases reported to WSIC, intended victims were directed to immediately leave work and go to a UPS store, so that the "investigator" could send a fax, which would confirm the investigation. A sample of such a fax is displayed in Figure 1[vi].

In one case the intended victim expressed doubt that the caller was a law enforcement officer and offered to turn herself in at the local police department. The caller began to threaten the intended victim with prison if she didn't stay on the phone with him and cooperate[vii]. In another case, the intended victim received the call on a work phone line, but was told the investigator needed her personal cell phone number. The scammer stayed on the work phone line with the intended victim until she answered the call on her personal cell phone[viii].

Despite some intended victims being on the phone with the scammers for an hour or more, none of the cases reported to WSIC progressed to the scammer asking for money. However, nationally the FBI has reports of the scammers eventually asking for "fees", or for money to be wired to a foreign bank account to "move the investigation forward"[ix].

The fictitious names used by the scammers in these calls have included: David Carter (three calls), Michael Anderson (two calls), Eugene O'Neil (one call), and Derrick Jones (one call). It is not uncommon for two scammers to be on the call with the intended victim at the same time, each playing different roles.

Recognizing Warning Signs of this Fraud:

- Receiving a call from a recognized, legitimate phone number, but being "transferred" to an Investigator, Agent, or other party shortly after the original caller confirms some basic details.

- Claims about being caught up in criminal investigations involving identity theft, co-workers being suspects, or requiring that you don't speak to anyone else about the call. The scammers have even claimed the Privacy Act of 1974 meant the intended victim couldn't speak to anyone about the call[x].

- These scammers go to great lengths to keep their intended victim on the phone, and typically do not ask for funds until they've spent a significant amount of time convincing the intended victim that the call is real.

- Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, legitimate law enforcement officers can arrange to safely interview a victim or witness in person, at a local law enforcement agency or other mutually agreed upon location.

- Legitimate government agencies and professional organizations will never call you to solicit money to resolve allegations of criminal activity.

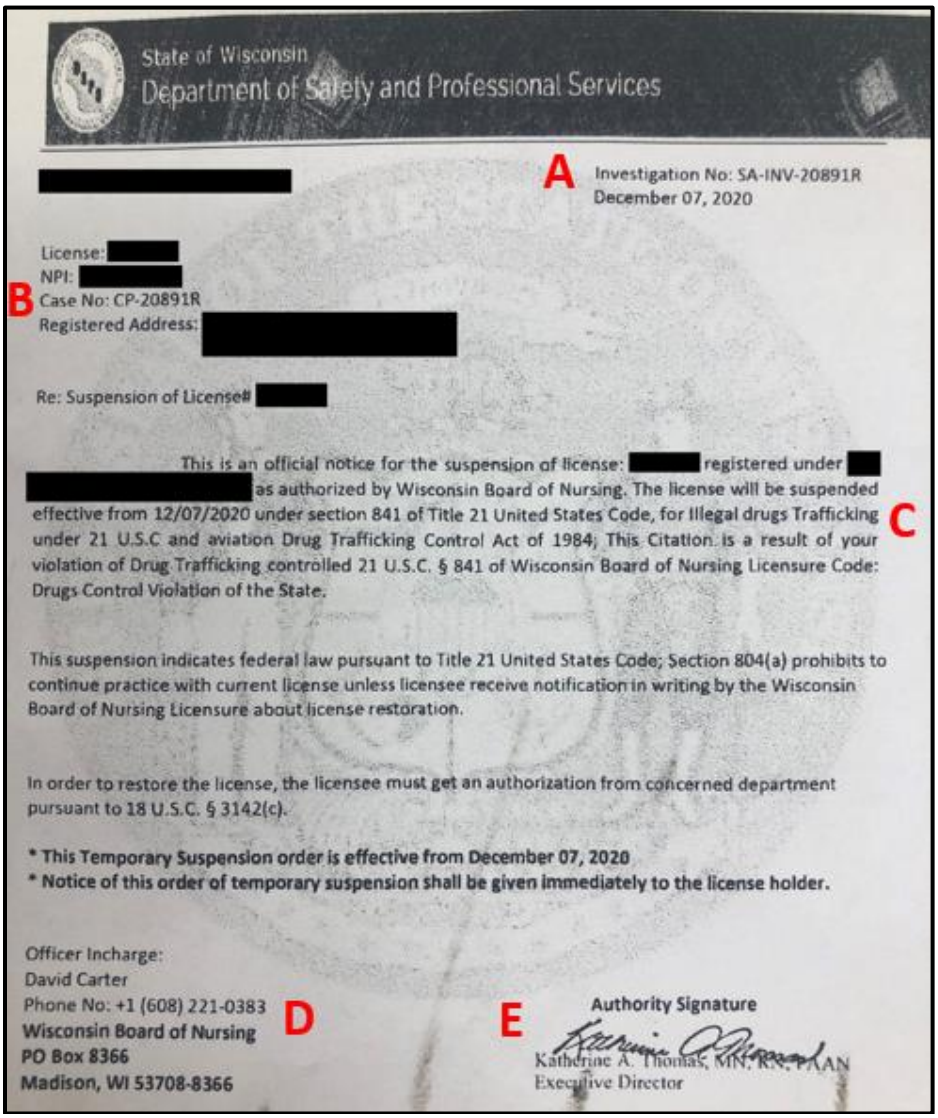
Recommend Actions If You Receive a Suspicious Call:

- If you are concerned for your immediate physical safety, hang up and dial 911.

- If in doubt about the authenticity of a call, **hang up** and call the originating agency at a published number (one you look up, not the number displayed on caller ID) to confirm the identity of the caller and the claims made during the call.

- Report scams and fraud attempts through the FBI's Internet Crimes Complaints Center (IC3) at https://ic3.gov.

Recognizing Fraudulent Faxes:



State of Wisconsin
Department of Safety and Professional Services

[redacted]

A Investigation No: SA-INV-20891R
December 07, 2020

License: [redacted]
NPI: [redacted]
B Case No: CP-20891R
Registered Address: [redacted]

Re: Suspension of License# [redacted]

This is an official notice for the suspension of license: [redacted] registered under [redacted] as authorized by Wisconsin Board of Nursing. The license will be suspended effective from 12/07/2020 under section 841 of Title 21 United States Code, for Illegal drugs Trafficking under 21 U.S.C and aviation Drug Trafficking Control Act of 1984; This Citation is a result of your violation of Drug Trafficking controlled 21 U.S.C. § 841 of Wisconsin Board of Nursing Licensure Code: Drugs Control Violation of the State. C

This suspension indicates federal law pursuant to Title 21 United States Code; Section 804(a) prohibits to continue practice with current license unless licensee receive notification in writing by the Wisconsin Board of Nursing Licensure about license restoration.

In order to restore the license, the licensee must get an authorization from concerned department pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3142(c).

* This Temporary Suspension order is effective from December 07, 2020
* Notice of this order of temporary suspension shall be given immediately to the license holder.

Officer Incharge:
David Carter
Phone No: +1 (608) 221-0383 D
Wisconsin Board of Nursing
PO Box 8366
Madison, WI 53708-8366

E Authority Signature
Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN
Executive Director

Figure 1 – Fraudulent Fax Received in Wisconsin

A) The "investigation number" used in this example follows the format used by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy, despite claiming to originate with the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services[xi].

B) The "case number" used in this example is similar to the "investigation number" above, with slightly different formatting.

C) The body of the letter is poorly written and makes extensive reference to federal law rather than state law, despite claiming to originate with a State of Wisconsin agency.

D) The phone number provided belongs to the Wisconsin Nurses Association, not the Wisconsin Board of Nursing.

E) The signature block belongs to the Executive Director of the Texas Board of Nursing. The Texas Board of Nursing has warned of similar fraudulent calls in their state[xii].

Reporting Notice: To report suspicious activity to the WSIC, please visit https://wifusion.widoj.gov/.

Sources:

[i] FIRST, Undated, TRAFFIC LIGHT PROTOCOL (TLP) FIRST Standards Definitions and Usage Guidance — Version 1.0, https://www.first.org/tlp/.

[ii] Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, December 16, 2020, Phone Call with Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center Analyst.

[iii] Wisconsin Nurses Association, February 3, 2021, Email to Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center titled, "RE: Fraud Calls to Nurses / Medical Staff".

[iv] Federal Bureau of Investigation, January 21, 2021, *Liaison Information Report –Scammers Posing as Medical Board Members and Law Enforcement Agents to Target Medical Providers for Wire Fraud Scheme*.

[v] Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, January 26, 2021, Email to Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center titled, "Fraud Call".

[vi] Medical Provider in Wisconsin, December 10, 2020, Email to Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center titled, "Scam Explanation".

[vii] Medical Provider in Wisconsin, December 10, 2020, Email to Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center titled, "Scam Explanation".

[viii] Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, January 26, 2021, Email to Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center titled, "Fraud Call".

[ix] Federal Bureau of Investigation, January 21, 2021, *Liaison Information Report –Scammers Posing as Medical Board Members and Law Enforcement Agents to Target Medical Providers for Wire Fraud Scheme*.

[x] Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services, January 26, 2021, Email to Wisconsin Statewide Intelligence Center titled, "Fraud Call".

[xi] Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy, September 1, 2015, *Agenda*, https://www.mass.gov/doc/board-of-pharmacy-minutes-september-1-2015-0/download

[xii] Texas Board of Nursing, Undated, *Telephone Scam Alert.* https://www.bon.texas.gov/TelephoneScamAlert.asp

For Administrative Purposes Only:
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