



# Department of Justice

Robert M. Duncan, Jr.  
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Eastern District of Kentucky

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## **U.S. Attorney Duncan Designates Federal Prosecutor to Lead Fight Against COVID-19 Fraud in Eastern District of Kentucky**

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Robert M. Duncan, Jr., the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky announced on Friday the appointment of a federal prosecutor to lead the fight against fraud related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attorney General William Barr has directed U.S. Attorneys nationwide to remain vigilant in detecting, investigating, and prosecuting criminal activity related to the crisis. As part of this strategy, U.S. Attorney Duncan designated Assistant U.S. Attorney Paul McCaffrey, Chief of the Office's Fraud Division, to serve as the COVID-19 Fraud Coordinator for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Working with federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, AUSA McCaffrey will coordinate and lead investigations and prosecutions of those who attempt to take advantage of people during this time of crisis.

To report fraud related to COVID-19, log on to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at <https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.

“Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, many are experiencing unprecedented levels of uncertainty and disruption. My Office stands ready to work with our federal, state, and local partners to prosecute those who prey on the anxiety of others and take advantage of this trying situation, for their personal gain,” said U.S. Attorney Duncan. “Fraudsters should be on notice that, even though we are in the midst of a national emergency, we will continue to enforce the law.”

U.S. Attorney Duncan warned the public to be extra cautious about unscrupulous schemes, particularly online. There have been reports locally and throughout the country of individuals and businesses selling fake cures or test kits for COVID-19 and engaging in other forms of fraud. Phishing emails from entities posing as the World Health Organization or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been sent to unsuspecting citizens.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Kentucky is also continuing a partnership with the Kentucky Attorney General's Office, in order to ensure the maximum number of resources are being devoted to prosecuting the reported fraud. Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron has instructed Kentuckians that suspect price gouging to use the Consumer Protection

Hotline at 888-432-9257, to report the gouging.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a crisis that takes support from every level of government,” said Attorney General Cameron. I appreciate United States Attorney Duncan’s proactive steps to fight illegal schemes, and we look forward to collaborating with our federal colleagues to protect Kentuckians.”

U.S. Attorney Duncan and Kentucky Attorney General Cameron offered tips to help avoid scammers:

- Do not click on links from sources you don’t know. These could be attempts to download viruses onto your computer or cell phone.
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. Watch out for products that claim to cure coronavirus or guarantee coronavirus prevention. There currently are no vaccines, pills, potions or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure COVID-19.
- Do your homework when it comes to donations, whether through charities or crowdfunding websites. Do not let anyone rush you into making a donation.
- If someone asks for a donation in cash, gift card, or wire transfer, do not do it.
- Be wary of emails from con artists pretending to be the Centers for Disease Control or other public health organizations. A legitimate medical provider would never ask for sensitive information through email.
- Consult the Kentucky Department for Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for reliable information and updates about the coronavirus. A COVID-19 hotline has also been established for health-related concerns and questions at 1-800-722-5725.

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