

# Alert: Beware of Scam Letters and/or Phone Calls

Warning: Scammers are using letters, in addition to phone calls, to scam licensees.

The Board of Pharmacy (BOP) has been notified of a **NEW** scam involving a letter being sent to pharmacists.

In a recent incident, the imposter called the pharmacist's cell phone using a caller ID that matched the Board of Pharmacy phone number. The caller claims to be a BOP investigator and says a rental car registered to the pharmacist's name has been found at the border of Mexico with fentanyl inside. The imposter threatened the pharmacist, claimed that the phone was tapped, and emails were being monitored by the BOP. The caller was intimidating and manipulative and connected the pharmacist with another caller who pretended to be an FBI agent. The alleged FBI agent then texted the pharmacist photos of an abandoned car with the drugs.

The pharmacist was sent a letter that claimed to be an official notice of suspension. This letter had a BOP letter head, state of California seal, the licensee number, and appeared to have been signed by the BOP's executive officer.

Fortunately, this licensee contacted the Board and confirmed that they were in good standing and not part of any investigation. The licensee also provided the information contained in this alert so that we could alert our licensees of this imposter and scam.

## Techniques used by fake callers include:

- A caller uses a caller ID that says "CA State Board of Pharmacy" with the Board's phone number, (916) 518-3100.
- The caller claims a licensee is under investigation by the Board, the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), the DEA, the FBI, or another government agency. In some cases, the caller also warns of discipline unless the licensee pays a "fine."
- A caller warns a licensee not to report the call to anyone "or else you will jeopardize the investigation."
- A caller requests a licensee's cell phone number.
- A caller gives a fake call-back number.

## These calls are scams!

In many cases, callers are attempting to extort money or elicit sensitive non-public information – e.g., bank account information, personal addresses, , DEA registration numbers, etc. – from licensees.

## What can you do to protect yourself and your pharmacy?

Licensee security is important to the Board of Pharmacy. Be aware of these tips from the Board and DCA:

- **If you have any doubts or questions about someone claiming – by phone or in person – to represent the California State Board of Pharmacy, call the Board at (916) 518-3100.**
- To check the identity of a caller who claims to be conducting a DCA investigation, call DCA directly at (800) 952-5210.
- If a scam caller claims to represent the DEA or the FBI, report the call to the [DEA's Extortion Scam reporting program](#) or the [FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center](#).
- If a scam caller's phone number appears to be a Board of Pharmacy or DCA telephone number, report the scam using the [Federal Communications Commission's consumer complaint form](#).

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