



Warning: Scam Calls Impersonating Investigators

The Iowa Board of Medicine (IBM) has seen a surge in scam calls by individuals impersonating investigators from the Iowa Board of Medicine (IBM), Iowa Board of Pharmacy (IBP), Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) made to physicians and pharmacists. The IBM encourages all licensees to take caution.

The scammers identify themselves as investigators, inspectors or agents and notify the licensee that they are under investigation for supposed fines and violations relating to suspicious activity, drug-trafficking, etc. The scammers tell licensees that their license may be suspended or that an arrest warrant has been issued in the licensee's name, and then they demand money directly over the phone. The threats can vary from disciplinary measures to legal action and arrest. The scammers are using techniques to appear legitimate, such as using false identification and "spoof" phone numbers. "Spoof" calls disguise a caller's true phone number and mimic valid phone numbers. In some cases, the scammers have used personal information of licensees such as their license number, address, and other details. Calls may be followed up with written scams demanding payment for nonexistent investigations.

IBM staff, including investigators, will never contact licensees demanding money or payment of any form or personalized information without conducting an official investigation or inquiry. The Board emphasizes that communication from any state investigators will not include a demand for immediate payment of fines over the phone. Licensees are notified of legal action in person or by official letter.

Any suspicious activity should be reported to:

- The Iowa Board of Medicine: 515-281-7088 or kent.nebel@iowa.gov.
- If the caller is stating they are from the DEA, report the scam using the DEA's online reporting form.
- If the caller is stating they are from the FBI, report the scam using the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center.
- If the phone number of the caller appears to be a valid agency telephone number, please report the scam to the agency and the Federal Communications Commission using the Consumer Complaint Form.

Warning: Telemedicine Company Scams

The Iowa Board of Medicine (IBM) is seeing an increasing number of physicians violating Iowa's telemedicine rules. Many of these cases involve specialized telemedicine companies providing singular service lines like orthopedic devices, or low risk medicines (i.e. erectile dysfunction medications). In these models, the physicians are provided an internet generated list of symptoms. The physicians are then prescribing medical equipment or medicine, without interacting with the patient. Even more concerning, the Board has received reports that telemedicine companies are providing medical equipment or medicine to patients using the physician's NPI number without the physician's knowledge.

If you are practicing telemedicine in Iowa, please review Iowa Administrative Code 653-13.11 Standards of Practice, Telemedicine found at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/chapter/09-09-2020.653.13.pdf>. If you are practicing telemedicine across state lines, the IBM strongly recommends you review those state's telemedicine laws and rules as well.

The IBM recognizes that telemedicine visits are useful, increasing in frequency, and that the standards of care are evolving. The IBM reminds all physicians practicing telemedicine in Iowa that they are required to establish a doctor-patient relationship, engage in an interactive visit with that patient, and that all visits must meet established standards of care.

If you have any questions or concerns about the practice of telemedicine in Iowa, or you believe that your telemedicine company may be asking you to violate the rules, please contact Executive Director, Kent M. Nebel, J.D., at 515-281-7088 or kent.nebel@iowa.gov.