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Media Release

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Attorney General Warns Consumers to be Vigilant Against New Telephone Scams

Wilmington – Delaware Attorney General Beau Biden today warned consumers to beware of phone scams that have been reported to his office in recent weeks.

In one such scam, consumers have received unsolicited phone calls from individuals fraudulently claiming to be raising funds for the Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition or other breast cancer research initiatives. At least one consumer who later contacted the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit gave the solicitor verbal authorization to charge a donation to her credit card account. That charge was posted to her account. In another telephone scam affecting Delawareans, consumers have been solicited by callers offering deeply discounted diabetes medicines. When consumers question the caller, the solicitor abruptly ends the call. The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Unit is reviewing complaints that have been filed by consumers as a result of these solicitations.

"Scammers have no problem exploiting consumers' generosity to cheat them out of their hard-earned money, but that doesn't mean consumers are powerless," said Attorney General Biden. "The best protection against scams is to be informed and cautious. I urge consumers to investigate solicitations they receive and to contact my office if they suspect fraud."

Consumers who receive telephone solicitations are reminded to ask questions and look for warning signs of scams by using the following tips:

- Ask for identification and written information about the business or charity, including name, address and telephone number. Be wary if they refuse to give you this information.
- Refuse high-pressure sales pitches. Remember: legitimate fund-raisers will not push you to give on-the-spot.
- Be cautious of fundraising appeals that tug at your heart strings, especially those involving patriotism, natural disasters or current events.
- If the sales or fundraising offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Use online tools to check out businesses and charities before you open your checkbook:
 - Better Business Bureau: www.bbb.org
 - American Institute of Philanthropy: www.charitywatch.org
 - Charity Navigator: www.charitynavigator.org

- Do some detective work:
 - Call the business or charity and verify whether they have authorized the solicitation/sales pitch that you received.
 - If the solicitor tells you a local organization will benefit from your donation, call that organization to verify the claim.
- If you believe a fraudulent solicitation was charged to your credit card contact your credit card company, dispute the charge, and file a consumer complaint with the Attorney General's Office. Download the complaint form at www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov.
- Report suspected scams to the Attorney General's Office by calling the Consumer Hotline at (800) 220-5424 or send an email to consumer.protection@state.de.us.

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