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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: June 16, 2020

TO: MEDIA MEMBERS

FROM: Stephen M. Wagstaffe, District Attorney

SUBJECT: Be Alert for COVID-19 Contact Tracing Scams

San Mateo County District Attorney Stephen M. Wagstaffe today advised San Mateo County residents to be alert for COVID-19 contact tracing scams.

Contact tracing is an important tool to slow the spread of COVID-19, especially as San Mateo County further eases its shelter in place restrictions, because it helps our San Mateo County Public Health division identify people who may have been in contact with a COVID-19 infected individual.

Once informed, people can quickly take proper precautions for their own health and those with whom they have close contact, including abiding by the County's quarantine and isolation orders. <https://www.smchealth.org/health-officer-orders-and-statements>. Residents should cooperate with legitimate contact tracers but be wary of scammers impersonating contact tracers. Scam artists pretend to be contact tracers to trick consumers into divulging their private personal information such as Social Security numbers, or financial or health insurance information.

If you receive a phone call with a caller ID that indicates “California COVID Team” it is likely our Public Health contact tracing staff trying to reach you. Official contact tracers will only ask you about your medical symptoms and the people with whom you have been in contact. All information provided to Public Health through contact tracing is strictly confidential and will be used for public health purposes only.

Official contact tracers will never ask for your Social Security number, financial or health insurance information. Questions about immigration status will not be asked. If someone claiming to be a contact tracer asks for your Social Security number or any kind of financial or health insurance information or tries charging you money or fees, it is a scam!

You should report COVID-19 related scams in San Mateo County to the District Attorney’s Office by calling (650) 363-4651 or visiting <https://da.smcgov.org/consumer-and-environmental-protection>, or by contacting your local police department.