



**SCAM  
ALERT**

## **COVID-19 FAKE LETTER ABOUT BENEFITS**

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has become aware of a new scam using the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic to create panic and potentially access your financial accounts and personal information by posing as government representatives. The letter is circulating on social media and contains a fake signature of a state official. **CDSS has alerted authorities who are investigating.**

The letter may contain false threats that clients must be tested for COVID-19 to continue receiving benefits. **This is false!**

Additional false threats may include that clients with children or grandchildren in the home will have the children moved to foster care if they test positive. **This is a hoax!**

The letter contains a link to a website, which is operated by the scam predators. **Do not click the link!**

CDSS and San Bernardino County Adult Protective Services (APS) joined with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Better Business Bureau to offer these suggestions to help avoid this type of threatening scam predator:

- **Never** click on links within an email or text
- **Do not** respond to pressure tactics that rush or threaten you
- **Remember** that state and county departments will **NEVER** ask about your health status in connection with applying for or receiving benefits
- **Know** that children **CANNOT** be placed in foster care only because a parent or grandparent may be ill
- **Always** keep personal information protected, including your address, Social Security, Medicare and bank account numbers

**Note:** You may report scam predators to the FTC, APS, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Internet Crime Complaint Center.

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact  
**San Bernardino County APS at 1 (877) 565-2020**  
or your local police department.