

ASOP Global Commends U.S. Attorney Hur for Fighting Against COVID-19 Fraud Swift action by the U.S. Attorney for Maryland stops sham website from stealing patient information

WASHINGTON – December 21, 2020 – In response to the recent seizure by the [U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Maryland](#) of websites “mordernatx.com” and “regeneronmedicals.com” for fraudulently posing as legitimate biotechnology companies actively developing treatments for COVID-19, the [Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies](#) (ASOP Global) issued the following statement:

ASOP Global applauds the quick, bold action by U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland Robert K. Hur and his colleagues to stop criminals from feigning legitimacy of biopharmaceutical manufacturer websites leveraging the COVID-19 pandemic to scam personal information from consumers, conduct phishing attacks and deploy malware for financial gain.

Since the start of the pandemic, ASOP Global has been leading the charge to [warn policymakers](#) about the explosion of malicious websites exploiting COVID-19 fears to trick consumers into giving up sensitive personal information and defraud them financially. Criminals have been quick to shift business operations to exploit pandemic-related fears and misinformation for profit. Our 2020 [national survey](#) shows that the pandemic is driving more Americans to purchase medications online. As recent FDA clearances and emergency use authorizations bring evidence-based coronavirus treatments, tests, and vaccines to market, the proliferation of COVID-themed scams and fraud has and is likely to continue worsening.

To mitigate the threats associated with scams that spoof legitimate biotechnology companies, law enforcement and the private sector must increase their vigilance for common ruses employed by scammers to mimic the appearance of genuine websites, such as slight misspellings of the company’s name.

Domain name registries and registrars (Ry/Rr) also have the power to stop online fraud by locking and suspending any domain name used to facilitate COVID-19 scams upon notice from the FDA and other trusted third-party notifiers. Congress should restore WHOIS data transparency to help root out Ry/Rr who serve as safe havens for illicit activity. This well-vetted, no cost reform would protect consumers and stop criminals from profiting from scams.

ASOP Global also urges consumers to be wary by avoiding clicking on links in suspicious emails and never providing personal information to unknown websites. Operation Stolen Promise, an initiative of the Homeland Security Investigations Intellectual Property Rights Center, offers patients [tips to recognize and report](#) COVID-19 fraud.

Please visit ASOP Global’s website for additional information on [internet accountability](#).

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ABOUT ASOP GLOBAL

The Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP Global), a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. with activities in U.S., Canada, Europe, Latin America and Asia, is dedicated to protecting consumers around the world, ensuring safe access to medications, and combating illegal online drug sellers.