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From the Undersecretary

Dear Massachusetts Consumer,

With 2020 coming to a close it's hard not to reflect on the past year, and what a year it was! While it began rather innocuously, the arrival of the Coronavirus early in the year changed how we do business as everyone socially distanced, stayed home, and worked remotely. This year will definitely go down in the history books as one in which we all worked together from afar to combat the spread of the pandemic.



As more and more of our daily activities moved to online platforms, we saw a jump in digital scams as criminals peddled COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. They even used the pandemic to come up with creative in-person cons such as going door-to-door wearing white lab coats and offering to do at home COVID testing. The [Federal Trade Commission](#) (FTC) has kept a record of COVID related scams and allows consumers to report any scams they may encounter. Locally, the Massachusetts Command Center is a great resource which provides [COVID-19 vaccine information](#).

While criminals sought new ways to scam the public, scientists worked diligently to develop a vaccine. So it is fitting that we end the year with two [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) approved vaccines, one by Pfizer and the other by local biotech company, Moderna. While vaccines will be given first to health care providers, vulnerable populations, and essential workers, it is comforting to know that in the next few months all Americans will have the opportunity to be vaccinated.

Despite the cancellation of this year's Boston Marathon, any resident of the Commonwealth can tell you that endurance is what it takes to get up Heartbreak Hill and reach the finish line. We are just passing through Newton now in our pandemic race and the finish line is within reach, so please adhere to Governor Charlie Baker's [holiday restrictions](#) and celebrate only with those you already spend time with. There will be plenty of time in the future for large social gatherings and celebrations.

Wishing you a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season and a very prosperous New Year!

Sincerely,

Edward A. Palleschi

Edward A. Palleschi
Undersecretary, Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

Consumer Briefs



Fraud Alert: Vaccination Scams

The good news is that two vaccines have received FDA approval for use in the U.S. The bad news is that it could be months until you receive a vaccine unless you are a first responder, essential worker, or older or immune-compromised American. And while this may be frustrating, a lot of planning by both the federal and local government was done to ensure that the most vulnerable are vaccinated first... [READ MORE](#)



Open Enrollment and What You Need to Know

It's Open Enrollment and the Massachusetts Division of Insurance and Massachusetts Health Connector are reminding consumers to carefully and fully review health coverage options and understand how they work before rushing into purchasing a health plan... [READ MORE](#)



Shop Safely this Holiday Season

This is the busiest shopping season of the year, and consumers everywhere are making online and in-person purchases, donations to their favorite charities, and anxiously waiting for packages containing gifts from loved ones to arrive. While we are festively busy, so are scammers, making fake calls, sending fraudulent text messages or phishing emails, and even following the delivery truck... [READ MORE](#)



Happy Holiday Returns

The holidays are here and as you both give and receive gifts it's likely you will find some cases in which items are the wrong size or style or color, are damaged, or otherwise just not right. This means one thing—returns. Unfortunately, there is no set law about return policies in Massachusetts. Each retailer has its own policy. On the plus side, defective merchandise must be accepted for return... [READ MORE](#)

TOP 10 WORST PRODUCTS OF THE YEAR 2020 FOR MASSACHUSETTS CONSUMERS

Take a jog down memory lane with us every day until 2021 as we look back at the worst consumer products of the year 2020 with our "Top 10 Worst Products for Massachusetts Consumers" list.

The products and services featured on this list have caused harm to consumers and resulted in legal or legislative action, recalls, and other steps taken to protect consumers.

#worstoftheyear



*The state has launched a **COVID-19 Text Message Notification System**. To receive daily updates **text "COVIDMA" to 888-777***



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