

## **Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Health Department Warns Food Establishments of Phony Inspector Scam**

**(Coldwater, MI.)** The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency warns local food establishments about a scam involving fake food inspectors who are currently making the rounds in Michigan.

The tri-county health department has received reports from local restaurant owners that individuals claiming to be from a health department have contacted them and requested to schedule an inspection at the establishment. They may also be seeking sensitive information.

“State and local food inspections are typically unannounced to ensure proper food safety measures are always being adhered to and it’s rare an inspector would schedule a visit in advance. Additionally, we never ask for sensitive, confidential financial information from an owner,” said Rebecca Burns, Environmental Health Director. “It is completely unacceptable for imposters to threaten or attempt to intimidate food establishments.”

Here are some quick tips, so you don’t fall victim to this scam:

- Ask for identification if someone stops by or calls claiming to be from the local health department, MDA, or federal food agencies that you don’t know.
- If the individual can not provide proper identification, do not allow the person access to your facility. Contact the health department immediately and report it.
- Never provide sensitive or confidential information over the phone such as a social security number. Federal, state and local food inspectors would never ask for that information.

If you think you have been contacted as part of a scam, please report the incident to your local law enforcement agency. To learn more about the Agency’s Environmental Health Services, visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org).

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