

Fraudulent Fax Update

On Jan. 3, the American Dental Association was alerted that many dentists across the country had recently received a fraudulent membership renewal communication via fax to their dental offices indicating payment should be sent to a post office (P.O.) box in Brockton, MA. This prompted the ADA to distribute an alert that afternoon about the fraudulent invoices to member and nonmember dentists with an email address in our database, leadership and staff at state and local dental societies, recognized specialty organizations and other organizations and individuals within the dental community.

Since our initial communication, the ADA has continued to work closely with U.S. Postal Service authorities. The following is a brief summary of action that has been taken to protect our members:

- On Jan. 5, within 48 hours of learning about this issue, the ADA filed a civil action in the Boston federal court that issued a temporary restraining order requiring that any mail sent to the P.O. Box listed in the fraudulent invoices should be held by the U.S. Postal Service and not made available to the individual renting the P.O. Box.
- On Jan. 17, the temporary restraining order was converted into a preliminary injunction, and we are now permitted to release information regarding our legal efforts on behalf of our members.
- The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is considering instituting an investigation, and has also referred the matter to the U.S. Attorney's office in Boston for possible criminal prosecution.

Our Executive Director, Dr. Kathleen O'Loughlin, stated, "We are pleased with the immediate action of our legal team and the efforts of staff to get the word out quickly to dentists throughout the country. We also recognize the actions of constituent and component societies who acted swiftly to post alerts on their websites and help with the communications efforts."

What to tell members who received one of the faxed fraudulent invoices

Do not send a payment. If you still have a copy of what you believe may be a fraudulent invoice, please forward it to Tom Elliott, deputy chief legal counsel, by email at elliott@ada.org or by fax to 312.440.2562, along with your name and ADA membership number.

What to tell members if they sent a payment to the P.O. Box

Thus far, the post office in Brockton, MA has received more than 170 pieces of mail addressed to the P.O. Box listed on the fraudulent invoice. We believe that the ADA's actions to seal the post office box occurred before any checks were received, as the P.O. Box was empty when it was sealed on Jan. 5.

- As a precaution, if you sent a check to the P.O. Box, the ADA encourages you to "stop payment" on the check. While there is normally a small cost associated with this, there is also the comfort of knowing the check cannot be cashed.
- Please contact the ADA Member Service Center at 800.621.8099 if you sent a check in response to the fraudulent invoice. ADA staff is assembling a list of dentists known to have sent checks so we can communicate and reconcile records with the U.S. Postal Service. You will be asked to complete a release form that will allow us to verify if the P.O. Box has received a check from you. Additionally, we are told the U.S. Postal Service may communicate directly with individuals who have sent mail to the P.O. Box.

Constituent and component executive directors and leadership are urged to share this information with membership and communications staff and direct further questions or concerns to the ADA Member Service Center at 800.621.8099.