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Public Information Office

#### DHHS Issues Warning of Fraudulent Food Inspectors

Concord, NH - The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Division of Public Health Services (DPHS), Food Protection Section is advising restaurant owners and operators to be wary of callers misrepresenting themselves as New Hampshire food inspectors.

"We have been alerted to a number of complaints from concerned restaurant owners from various regions of the State who have received calls from someone posing as a health inspector," said DHHS Public Health Director Dr. José Montero. "The fake inspector attempts to schedule an inspection at the restaurant and threatens to impose fines if they don't book an appointment. Our Food Protection Inspectors conduct unannounced inspections and would not be calling to schedule appointments for routine inspections. They also do not threaten enforcement actions or ask for confidential information over the phone."

Officials conducting restaurant inspections will also have proper photo identification from the State of New Hampshire. Food service establishments are advised not to provide sensitive or confidential information over the telephone.

The scam is reportedly targeting restaurant owners here in New Hampshire and across the country.

Restaurant owners and operators are advised to immediately report suspicious or fraudulent calls to local law enforcement officials. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the DHHS Food Protection Section at 603-271-4589. You can also call the New Hampshire Department of Justice Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-888-468-4454 between 9 am and 3 pm.

Educational materials for food establishment owners and managers to increase employee awareness of suspicious behavior are available at the following websites:

<http://www.fda.gov/food/fooddefense/training/alert/default.htm>

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodDefense/Training/ucml35038.htm>