



**State Attorney**  
**18th Judicial Circuit**  
Brevard and Seminole County



State Attorney William Scheiner

# The Monthly Brief

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## Avoid AC-Repair Rip-offs

When air conditioning breaks down during a Florida summer, consumers want it repaired ASAP. Sadly, bad actors are ready to exploit this urgent need, the Florida Attorney General warns. Watch out for these red flags:

### High quotes to replace working parts

Scammers will claim that HVAC parts need to be replaced when nothing is wrong — often quoting part replacement prices so high that the customer decides a new HVAC system is a better option.

### Recharge scam

Household AC refrigerant does not need to be recharged. If a technician says a refrigerant recharge is a solution to AC problems, it is a ploy to sell an unneeded service.

### Starting work too soon

Dishonest HVAC technicians will often start to perform work before consumers understand or have agreed to a contract. Sometimes one technician will distract the consumer while another technician removes or dismantles the AC unit, leaving the consumer feeling committed.

With AC repairs, the best protection against rip-offs is to seek multiple inspections and written estimates before approving work — even if it means sweating a little longer.

Remember: Florida law gives consumers the right to cancel an HVAC contract within three business days, unless the consumer waives the three-day period in writing.

Report AC scams to the Florida Attorney General's Office: 1(866) 9-NOSCAM or online at MyFloridaLegal.com.

## Genetic-Testing Scams Again Target Seniors

Genetic-testing scams have re-emerged as a significant threat to seniors, with fraudsters exploiting their trust to steal personal information and defraud Medicare.



Adobe AI illustration

At health fairs or through unsolicited calls, seniors are lured with promises of "free" genetic tests to screen for cancer risks or other hereditary vulnerabilities. These tests, often medically unnecessary, can be ordered by a third-party doctor and billed to Medicare at exorbitant rates (upwards of \$10,000 a claim), while scammers harvest seniors' Medicare numbers for identity theft or further fraud.

In some cases, Medicare denies the claims — leaving seniors with unexpected, unpaid medical bills. Other times, seniors receive substandard test kits that provide no

reliable medical information. Scammers often pressure seniors to act quickly, claiming the tests are urgent, or use fake credentials to appear legitimate.

In December, a West Palm Beach man was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role in a wide-ranging conspiracy to defraud Medicare by billing over \$67 million for medically unnecessary genetic testing.

How to protect yourself:

- **Go to your own doctor to assess your condition** — not a doctor on the phone you've never met from a company you don't know.
- **Report, verify suspicious calls.** If you receive a questionable call, hang up and contact Medicare directly at 1-800-633-4227 to report or verify it. Do not call phone numbers provided by the caller.
- **Guard Your Information.** Never share your Medicare or Social Security number with unknown parties, especially over the phone or online.

### Need General Medicare Insurance Help?

Call Florida's Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-800-963-5337



## Brevard Teacher Convicted in Teenage House Party Case



SAO Photo

Assistant State Attorneys Pepper Worthy (pictured) and Megan Taylor successfully prosecuted a former Brevard teacher for her role at a teenage house party that made news nationwide.

A jury found Carly Anderson, 45, guilty on May 6 of disorderly intoxication and resisting an officer without violence. Police body-camera video showed Anderson confronting and interfering with a Cocoa Beach police officer who was aiding a drunk and incapacitated teen outside the party.

## Prosecutors Seek Indictments in Fight Against Fentanyl

Four times this year, Grand Juries in Brevard and Seminole Counties have indicted drug dealers for murder after customers died from fentanyl overdoses.

Most recently, the Seminole Grand Jury indicted Sean Herman, 35, on May 13 for first-degree murder by unlawful distribution of a controlled substance. That followed the death of an Altamonte Springs man who was found dead in a recliner chair, feet away from confirmed drugs. Police connected Herman through text messages on the dead man's phone.

## State Attorney Warns Seniors of Top Scams

The best way to fight most scams is to help people protect themselves before they fall victim. That's why State Attorney William Scheiner was glad to talk with about 75 engaged residents during the recent ScamJam event in Viera organized by Helping Seniors-Brevard and AARP Florida.

The state attorney for Brevard and Seminole counties warned of the top three scams targeting seniors in Florida recently:



SAO Photo

**Toll collection fraud:** Text message appears on your phone saying you owe unpaid Epass tolls, asks you to click link to pay up via credit card.

**'Tech support':** Fraudsters posing as technical support representatives call and ask for remote access to victim's computers. Once in, they steal funds and financial info.

**Real ID scams:** With Real ID-compliant identification now required for air travel, scammers are offering "Real ID registration" for a fee.

## Man Who Posed as DEA Agent Gets 30 Years for Botched Heist

One of five men who posed as DEA and sheriff's agents during a fatal home-invasion robbery on Merritt Island has been sentenced to 30 years in prison. Brian Vogel, 33, was convicted of second-degree murder and armed burglary of a dwelling for his role in a botched heist in 2021 in which victim Matthew Nicol, 25, was accidentally shot and left to bleed to death. Vogel also was convicted of cruelty to animals for shooting and killing Nicol's protective German shepherd, Mako, as part of the plan.

Assistant State Attorney Bernadette Serafinowicz introduced home-security video of the robbers arriving at Nicol's home in a U-Haul van while wearing police tactical clothing and carrying assault rifles.

## Governor Signs Dexter's Law to Get Tough on Animal Abuse

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed Dexter's Law, which lets prosecutors seek tougher criminal penalties for animal cruelty and creates a statewide database of abusers to stop them from adopting.

The Brevard-Seminole State Attorney's Office endorsed Dexter's law – named for an



adopted dog who was found decapitated – to hold criminally liable those who torture, abuse and harm animals.

The new law takes effect July 1.