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Fraudulent Health Notices Appearing on Vacant Homes

-Notices Falsely Claim Home Contains Chinese Drywall-

Fort Myers, FL – Fraudulent health notices have been appearing on vacant and foreclosed homes in Cape Coral. The notices falsely claim the home has been inspected by the Department of Health and contain Chinese drywall. However, no health agency in Lee County or the state of Florida inspects for or issues notices concerning the presence of Chinese drywall.

“We urge residents to be on the alert for this type of fraud as these notices are not associated with the Lee County Health Department or the Florida Department of Health (DOH),” said Dr. Judith A. Hartner, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., Director of the Lee County Health Department.

Last month the Florida attorney general warned residents to be alert to bogus sales pitches targeting homeowners. Test kits, costly home inspection offers, chemical cleaners and ozone generators are just some of the deceptive ploys that have appeared in other parts of Florida.

Chinese drywall has been a concern for many Lee County residents. Gases emitted from Chinese drywall have been blamed for causing copper surfaces such as pipes, wiring and air conditioner coils to corrode and turn black, and may cause an odor similar to rotten eggs.

The majority of homes that contain defective imported drywall were built between 2004 and 2008. The most definitive method to date is finding a "made in China" marking on the back of a sheet of drywall. The presence of defective imported drywall cannot be determined by “testing” the air in the home. However, the question should really be "Does my house have corrosion problems?"

Currently there is no proven and effective treatment method other than removal and replacement of the suspected or known source material. Claims of treatment involving ozone, coatings, and air cleaners should be scrutinized for evidence of proven effectiveness. The DOH recommends against the use of ozone generators in occupied spaces, since ozone is a highly reactive and irritating molecule and is considered hazardous to people and pets. These products may make the problem worse.

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DOH has not identified data suggesting an imminent or chronic health hazard at this time. However, if you or anyone in your household is experiencing adverse health effects please contact your health care provider for advice and treatment options.

If anyone has information concerning the fraudulent health notices they may contact the Cape Coral Police Department at (239) 574-3223. Consumers who wish to file a complaint about these scams may do so by calling the Attorney General's fraud hotline at 1-866-9-NO-SCAM (1-866-966-7226) or by filing a complaint online at <http://myfloridalegal.com>. More information on Chinese drywall is available online at: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Environment/community/indoor-air/drywall.html> and <http://www.cpsc.gov/drywall.pdf>

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