

3M has sued 5 vendors who targeted emergency officials in 3 states offering billions of nonexistent N95 respirators

None of the defendants in the lawsuits is connected to 3M, nor had access to the billions of 3M brand respirators they tried to sell officials in Florida, Wisconsin and Indiana at highly inflated prices.

ST. PAUL, Minn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- 3M has filed five legal actions in federal courts in Florida, Wisconsin and Indiana as part of its global effort to protect the public and combat fraud and counterfeiting. The lawsuits involve separate defendants who attempted to target government officials with fraudulent offers to sell N95 respirators—in one case claiming to have up to five *billion* respirators—at inflated prices, all while falsely affiliating themselves with 3M.

“We are grateful that in each of these cases, the false offers were reported to 3M, and the attempts to deceive public officials did not succeed,” said Ivan Fong, 3M Senior Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary. “We will continue to take legal action in cases like these and are working closely with national and international law enforcement to help stop the perpetrators of these unlawful and unethical schemes.”

In the following four cases filed late Thursday, and the Wisconsin lawsuit filed on Tuesday, 3M is seeking injunctive relief to require the companies to cease illegal activities. 3M will donate any damages recovered to COVID-19-related nonprofit organizations.

In federal court in Tallahassee, Florida 3M sued Atlanta, Georgia-based 1 Ignite Capital LLC, Institutional Financial Sales LLC, and Auta Lopes for attempting to sell 10 million N95 respirators to the Florida Division of Emergency Management at nearly 460% percent over list prices, falsely claiming that they were working with 3M.

In federal court in Tampa, Florida 3M sued St. Petersburg, Florida-based TAC2 Global LLC for claiming to be a 3M distributor and for trying to sell the Florida Department of Management Services State Emergency Operations Center 5-10 million N95 respirators and hand sanitizer at highly inflated prices. TAC2 falsely claimed to be a 3M supplier.

In federal court in Orlando, Florida 3M sued King Law Center, Chartered for twice pretending to be affiliated with 3M as a vendor and escrow agent and for trying to sell the Florida Department of Management Services State Emergency Operation Center 5 million N95 respirators at 460% over list prices.

In federal court in Indianapolis, Indiana, 3M sued Zachary Puznak and two related entities, Zenger LLC and ZeroAqua, after Puznak claimed to be working with 3M and purported to be able to sell up to 5 billion 3M respirators to the state of Indiana at more than double the list price. Puznak accused Indiana’s state employees of “paranoid irrationality” for asking for confirmation of any connection to 3M and falsely claimed 3M executives had told him to abandon the deal, according to 3M’s complaint. In fact, Puznak has no connection whatsoever to 3M.

On April 28, 2020, 3M filed a lawsuit in federal court in Madison, Wisconsin against Hulomil LLC for trying to sell 250,000 N95 respirators to state officials at inflated prices, while trying to force Wisconsin to sign a nondisclosure agreement about the deal and falsely claiming to have “direct access from 3M.”

3M has not changed the prices it charges for respirators as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. 3M is working with national and international law enforcement agencies, state Attorneys General, and the largest online retail and tech companies in the world to identify illegal activity and help pursue and stop these schemes. The goal is to prevent fraud before it starts and stop it where it is happening.

3M has filed a total of 10 lawsuits in April in its effort to combat fraud. 3M has deployed its internal litigation team, working closely with volunteers from its network of outside counsel and resources, across the country in its ongoing efforts to investigate and take action against unlawful and unethical attempts to take advantage of the COVID-19 crisis.

In the Florida cases, 3M is represented by a team from the law firm McDermott Will & Emery LLP including Wilson Chu, Michael Chu, Michael Weaver, Joseph Wasserkrug, Colin Stalter, and Kristin Taylor. In the Wisconsin case, 3M is represented by Goldman Ismail, led by Andrew Rima, Shayna Cook, and Betsy Farrington. In the Indiana case, 3M is represented by the law firm Faegre Drinker including John W. Ursu, Kerry Bundy and Isaac Hall in Minneapolis, and Kathy Osborn and Louis Perry in Indianapolis.

Resources to fight fraud

3M has created a hotline to call for information on how to help identify authentic 3M products and to ensure products are from 3M authorized distributors. That number, in the U.S. and Canada, is (800) 426-8688.

If customers have concerns about potentially fraudulent activity, price gouging, or counterfeit 3M products, they can report their concerns at [3M's website](#).

About 3M

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Source: 3M

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