



**OFFICE OF THE
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PRESS RELEASE

**CRIMINAL CHARGES POSSIBLE IN
"HEALTH LIST" HOAX CIRCULATED ONLINE**

KANKAKEE, IL – On or about January 8, 2018, a list was circulated on a social media platform purporting to disclose the HIV and/or herpes status of various individuals in the Kankakee County community; among the allegations was that the list “came from someone at the [Kankakee County] Health Department.” County officials wish to assure the community that the information being circulated is false and is not in any way connected to the Health Department. The State’s Attorney’s Office will consider filing charges for ‘harassment through electronic communications’ [720 ILCS 5/26.5-3(a)(1)] if the origin of the list can be determined. With over 30 individuals named on the false list, the offender could face a separate criminal charge for each victim.

John Bevis, Public Health Administrator of the Kankakee County Health Department, stated that “this list and the message it references is false. The Kankakee County Health Department does not generate lists of clients or medical diagnoses of any kind. The Kankakee County Health Department is committed to providing the community and its clients quality care including the protection of personal and private information of each person. I want to assure everyone that we have policies and procedures in place that protect the privacy of every person served through the Department’s programs and services.”

State’s Attorney Jim Rowe is researching the possibility of criminal charges in connection with this incident, and strongly discourages others from circulating, sharing or otherwise disseminating the false information. “The spreading of false information of this sort is harmful to our community. It may be especially detrimental where it keeps someone from seeking medical treatment for an STD or makes people feel less secure in their ability to see a physician and get treatment. I hope that those who have publicly shared this false list will remove the post from their respective social media accounts and not add to the problem. It is unfortunate for those who have had their names publicly tied to this hoax, and the person or persons responsible for this should be held accountable,” said Rowe.

Sheriff Mike Downey said that anyone with information about the individual(s) responsible for creating and initially circulating the false list should contact the Investigations Division of the Kankakee County Sheriff’s Department at 815-802-7150.

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