ExecTech Management Consulting

To: Practice Owner **Tips and Ideas** Monday, March 16, 2015

Scam Alert: The Top Five

One of our consulting clients almost lost $500+ this week during his record-breaking production day. Despite being incredibly busy, he took the time to figure out the scam and call the police.

Unfortunately, smart people with unethical intentions want to steal your money. They use fear, logic and confusion to try and rip you off.

1. The "Utilities Payment" Scam

You get a call from your power company or other utility. The caller says, "I'm calling from the Collections Department. We will be turning off your power in 24 hours as we have not received payment from you for the past two months. It appears there was problem with your credit card processing."

The caller then asks for your credit card information, or tells you to buy a pre-paid credit card and give the number when he or she calls back. The scam also comes by email where you need to either download an attachment or login to a fake website to enter your credit card information

2. The "Chinese Domain Registration" Scam

You get an email from an Asian address offering to register your domain name in China or other country. "If you do not register your domain name in China, you may lose your rights to use it in China forever." The email asks you to click a link to enter your credit card information.

Even if you plan to pursue new patients in other countries, just ignore these emails.

3. The "Calling from Microsoft" Scam

"Hello, I'm a tech support employee from Microsoft. Your computer may be infected with a virus and we need to fix it." For this article, we pretended to believe him and asked for his help. He had us go to a few websites to "test" my system.

He then told us the bad news about the infection he found and that "there will be a charge for any tech support services moving forward." He just needed our credit card information.

4. The "We're Getting Error Messages from Your Computer" Scam

The caller ID says the call is from a US city. You answer and someone says, "We're getting error messages from your computer we want to resolve. Are you near your computer?"

For fun, we said, "OH NO!" Which of my computers has the problem?"

Joseph paused and said, "Your Dell computer?"

We said, "Sorry Joe. We don't have a Dell, but nice try." He hung up.

5. The "I'm Calling from the IRS" Scam

The IRS only sends written notifications of taxes owed by mail, and never asks for credit, debit or prepaid card information over the telephone. Yet per the IRS, hundreds of people fall for this scam every day!

IRS victims are called and threatened with fines, arrest or driver license revocations. The callers are hostile and give badge numbers. Of course, they can resolve your issue with your credit card number.

If you get a call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, call 800-829-1040 or go to www.irs.gov.

The scammers also use email, so the IRS warns, "Never open an attachment or click on any links contained in the message. Instead, forward the e-mail to phishing@irs.gov."

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