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New Text Scam to Watch Out For

Buffalo, NY (WBEN) First, a telephone scam last month. Now, Erie County's fiscal watchdog is warning you about a texting scam aimed at getting your bank information.

Comptroller Mark Poloncarz says an Erie County employee notified him in February about a phone call and automated message warning potential victims that their "Western New York Credit Union" debit card had been deactivated and requesting they then enter their account information to "reactivate."

Now, the message is an "HSBC ALERT" sent by text to cell phones. text message that reads, "HSBC ALERT" asking them to call a phone number in order to resolve an alleged problem with an HSBC account. The phone number leads to a professional recording that then asks for the victim's bank account information. It appears random cell phone numbers are being used, though it is unknown exactly how widespread these text messages are.

Poloncarz says, "Instead of an automated message pretending to be from the 'Western New York Credit Union,' it's a text message supposedly from HSBC Bank. Last night, I received two of these fraudulent text messages on my personal cell phone. While they may seem legitimate they are not. Please do not be fooled; this is a scam. Considering the text messages are being received by many county residents, regardless of whether they are a customer of HSBC Bank, it is important that all residents be aware of this scam and be vigilant to these scam artists."

Poloncarz warned, "HSBC representatives have confirmed to me that they would never send a text message to their customers and that this is a scam. As soon as you are asked for any sensitive personal information, that's when you should be suspicious. Whether you are an HSBC customer or not, your bank or credit card company WILL NEVER call or text you and ask for your account information. It's a scam. With this information, scammers can assume your identity and empty your bank accounts. If you are a HSBC customer and provided these scammers your account information, your

account may be compromised. You should immediately contact your branch manager to report such action and protect your account's assets."

If you get such a text, report such solicitations to **the** Erie County Comptroller's Whistleblower Hotline at (716) 858-7722, the New York State Attorney General's office at (800) 771-7755 or the Federal Trade Commission at (877) 382-4357.

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