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**District Attorney Establishes Hotline to Help Protect Consumers From
COVID-19 Test Price Gouging**

VENTURA, California – District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced Tuesday that his office has established a new electronic hotline to help protect Ventura County residents against price gouging of at-home COVID-19 test kits. The hotline is in response to an executive order issued by Governor Newsom on January 8, 2022.

The Executive Order protects California consumers by generally prohibiting sellers from increasing the sales price of tests by more than 10 percent of what the same test was sold for on December 1, 2021. Additionally, sellers who did not previously sell COVID-19 tests are prohibited from setting a price greater than 50 percent of what that seller paid to procure the tests. Each test kit sold in violation of the Executive Order is a separate misdemeanor violation punishable by up to six months in jail, a \$1,000 fine, or potentially both jail and a fine. Violators may also be subject to a civil enforcement action resulting in civil penalties, restitution, and injunctions. The consumer protections provided by the Executive Order remain in effect through March 31, 2022.

“Our office is committed to safeguarding consumers against unscrupulous businesses and individuals who seek to illegally profit from the pandemic,” said District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. “If you believe you were a victim of price gouging, please report it to our consumer protection unit right away.”

Alleged price gouging violations concerning the sale of at-home COVID-19 test kits in Ventura County may be reported to the District Attorney’s Office by emailing DAOpricegouging@ventura.org with the following information:

1. Date and time of purchase,
2. Seller’s information including address, phone number and email, if possible,

3. Cost of the test kit,
4. Cost of the test kit (if known) on December 1, 2021, from the same seller, and,
5. Contact information for the reporting party.

Additional details concerning the Executive Order can be found here: [Executive Order N-2-22](#)

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The Ventura County District Attorney's Office is the public prosecutor for the county's 850,000 residents. The office employs approximately 290 employees including attorneys, investigators, victim advocates, and professional support staff who strive to seek justice, ensure public safety, and protect the rights of crime victims.