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## Press Release

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### **Insurance Fraud Awareness and Protecting Consumers—Two Goals with a Joint Purpose**

In an effort to further increase consumer protection coverage and more efficiently address fraudulent activities against consumers and insurance companies, the Alaska Division of Insurance recently merged the Fraud Investigation and Consumer Services sections. The newly aligned section will address a wide range of issues from consumer complaints to administrative matters and criminal investigations. Bringing together the combined talents of seasoned consumer services representatives and fraud investigators will promote efficient sharing of information and resources. During the transition all staff will receive cross-training. The merged section will host presentations for the insurance industry and the public to provide general awareness of fraudulent insurance activities and the division's ability to respond.

Division of Insurance Chief Investigator Alex Romero will oversee the newly formed section. "I believe this alignment will enable us to more effectively protect consumers and to raise awareness," Romero said, "And coincidentally, the merger aligns with October being Insurance Fraud Awareness Month."

In fiscal year 2014, the Consumer Services section investigated over 300 consumer complaints, accomplished a closure rate of 85%, and recovered over \$200,000 for Alaska consumers. The Fraud Investigation unit likewise closed over 85% of its cases, recovering approximately \$60,000 for consumers and insurance companies. Composed of staff from already high performing teams, the newly merged section will even more efficiently advance the public service mission of the Division of Insurance.