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State warns contest sponsors about unlicensed 'prize' insurer *Oregonians encouraged to report contact with Hole-In-Won.com*

(Salem) — Last fall, a charity that sponsored a golf contest bought insurance to cover the \$10,000 prize in case a golfer beat the odds at Heron Lakes Golf Course in Portland.

Sure enough, Matt Ramsay, a casual golfer from Vancouver, Wash., made the 67-foot putt. You don't have to imagine his excitement; you can see it here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQISosgOoNE. Now, however, collecting the prize money seems like the long shot. The insurer, Hole-In-Won.com, still hasn't paid.

"I hate being taken advantage of and really feel bad for Matt," said Evan Denhart. His foundation, the Prostate Awareness Research Foundation (PAR for Life), was raising money through the putting contest for prostate cancer education and research.

Hole-In-Won.com isn't licensed to sell insurance in Oregon and neither is its president, Kevin Kolenda of Rye, N.Y. Nonetheless, Oregon consumers have reported receiving fax blasts with Hole-In-Won's name. The marketing material directs people to a website that promotes event coverage, including "hole-in-one insurance." However, the site fails to mention the business is not licensed in Oregon.

"With Hole-In-Won still selling insurance online, we are warning Oregonians not to do business with this company," said Lou Savage, acting administrator of the Insurance Division. "The company is currently under investigation by the state."

Organizations in Oregon that have been approached by Hole-In-Won are asked to contact Insurance Division Investigator Stephanie Noren at 503-947-7233 or stephanie.j.noren@state.or.us.

In the meantime, other states have ordered Hole-In-Won.com and its employees to stop selling insurance. Insurance regulators in Connecticut fined Kolenda \$5.9 million, although that state has yet to collect any money. Kolenda is also accused of failing to pay claims on prizes he covered.

Ramsay thought his prize money would have come in handy with a newborn.

"I was going to pay for about eight months of his day care," he said.

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