

OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

RE: Major Online Dating Company Settles Consumer Protection Lawsuit for \$2 Million
Prosecutors Allege Match Group, Inc. Violated the State's Auto Renewal Laws

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley announced today that Match Group, Inc., the owner of numerous popular online dating sites including Match.com, PlentyofFish, OkCupid and Tinder, agreed to pay \$2 million in civil penalties and costs, in addition to victim restitution, as part of the settlement of a consumer protection lawsuit. The lawsuit was filed in Santa Cruz County in November 2020 by the California Auto Renewal Task Force (CART), which includes the District Attorney's Offices in San Diego, Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties and the Santa Monica City Attorney's Office, and alleged that Match's online dating service subscriptions violated provisions of California's Automatic Renewal and Dating Service Contract laws.

Among other things, the Task Force alleged that Match's sign-up processes failed to clearly and conspicuously inform consumers that they were enrolling in an automatically-renewing service and failed to secure their affirmative consent as required by law. Additionally, the prosecution team alleged that Match's post-payment acknowledgments failed to inform consumers how to cancel and that the cancellation process was lengthy and tedious – also violations of California's automatic renewal laws. Match has denied these allegations.

District Attorney Dudley said, "California's automatic renewal laws are intended to protect consumers from hidden and unanticipated recurring charges, and to ensure that consumers are able to quickly and easily cancel automatically-renewing subscriptions. Companies that violate these laws harm consumers by preventing consumers from making informed choices about how to spend their money. The Santa Barbara District Attorney's Office and its CART colleagues will continue to hold companies accountable when they violate these important consumer protection laws."

Santa Cruz Superior Court Judge Timothy Volkmann entered a final court judgment on the parties' stipulated settlement on July 7, 2021.

The judgment requires Match to have full transparency with consumers about their automatically renewing subscriptions. The company must:

- Clearly and conspicuously disclose its automatic-renewal terms
- Obtain consumers' affirmative consent to the terms through a separate checkbox or similar mechanism before charging for an automatic renewal or continuous service
- Email consumers a confirmation of the transaction after they pay which clearly includes the automatic-renewal terms and information on how to cancel
- Allow consumers to easily cancel their subscriptions, including online

Match has already taken steps to ensure its web disclosures and processes comply with California's Automatic Renewal and Dating Service Contract laws.
