

South Bronx and Staten Island. NHS is a HUD-approved housing counseling agency, a NeighborWorks® Chartered organization, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), and a National Foreclosure Mitigation Counseling program (NFMC) grantee. Please visit our website at www.nhsnyc.org to learn more.

VNS CHOICE is an affiliate of the Visiting Nurse Service of New York. The Visiting Nurse Service of New York is the largest not-for-profit home health care organization in the country. Comprised of 14,340 dedicated employees including more than 2,400 nurses, 520 rehabilitation therapists (physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech therapists), more than 7,800 home health aides, 620 social workers, and 135 other clinical professionals. The Visiting Nurse Service of New York has served NYC since 1893 and is a vital part of New York's public health infrastructure, delivering care annually to over 140,000 New Yorkers of all ages and all walks of life.

The **Verizon Foundation**, supports the advancement of literacy and K-12 education through its free educational Web site, Thinkfinity.org, and fosters awareness and prevention of domestic violence. In 2009, the Verizon Foundation awarded more than \$67.5 million in grants to nonprofit agencies in the U.S. and abroad. It also matched the charitable donations of Verizon employees and retirees, resulting in an additional \$24.4 million in combined contributions to nonprofits. Through Verizon Volunteers, one of the nation's largest employee volunteer programs, Verizon employees and retirees have volunteered more than 5 million hours of community service since 2000. For more information on the foundation, visit www.verizonfoundation.org.

Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE:VZ), headquartered in New York, is a global leader in delivering broadband and other wireless and wireline communications services to mass market, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, serving more than 89 million customers nationwide. Verizon also provides converged communications, information and entertainment services over America's most advanced fiber-optic network, and delivers innovative, seamless business solutions to customers around the world. A Dow 30 company, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of more than 230,000 and last year generated consolidated revenues of more than \$97 billion. For more information, visit www.verizon.com.

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DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES SOUNDBITE COMMUNICATIONS AGREES NOT TO SELL TEXT MESSAGING SERVICES FOR OVERDRAFT ENROLLMENT

Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today announced that SoundBite Communications will not sell services that include the use of text messages as a method to obtain consent to enroll consumers into overdraft protection services. The Department called upon banks and marketing firms such as SoundBite not to undermine new federal regulations with illegal or aggressive solicitations to enroll New Yorkers into overdraft protection earlier this year. SoundBite agreed its platform will only use direct mail, telephone,

or e-mail and Web-based electronic communications to provide overdraft notices and obtain customer enrollments. SoundBite Communications promotes its "text message solution" to financial institutions, which must obtain the consent of customers before enrolling them into overdraft services, per new federal regulations going into effect beginning July 1. SoundBite agreed that these new federal regulations, which make the current practice of automatic overdraft enrollment illegal, do not allow financial institutions to provide notice or obtain consent via text messages.

Last month, Commissioner Mintz wrote a letter to SoundBite, cautioning the firm against aggressive marketing strategies that defy the federal regulations and threaten the financial security of consumers. The announcement today by Commissioner Mintz follows a meeting between officials from SoundBite and Commissioner Mintz where the marketing firm agreed with our interpretation of the federal rules. DCA also wrote Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, requesting that the Fed prohibit financial institutions from using text messages to obtain consent from their customers before enrolling them into overdraft services.

"I am encouraged that SoundBite has agreed not to sell text-message opt-in services as a method of enrolling consumers into overdraft services," said Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "The 160-character limit of a text message could never genuinely inform a customer about important and complex account feature options, particularly ones with such significant economic consequences. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor overdraft enrollment efforts aimed at New Yorkers, working closely with the federal government to ensure consumers are given the information they deserve as they make this important choice in the coming months."

In New York City, DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law, which outlaws deceptive marketing of products and services to New York City consumers. As two examples under the leadership of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Department has prosecuted national tax preparers and wireless phone companies for such violations. Since 2005, the Department has secured more than half a million dollars in settlements from wireless phone companies alone for deceptive advertising.

DCA enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses, DCA licenses more than 71,000 businesses in 57 different industries. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses alike about their rights and responsibilities. DCA's Office of Financial Empowerment is the first municipal office of its kind in the nation with a mission to educate, empower and protect New Yorkers with low incomes. DCA's OFE administers a citywide network of Financial Empowerment Centers and other products and services that help these New Yorkers make the best use of their financial resources to move forward economically. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at nyc.gov/consumers.