

# COVID-19 Vaccine Fraud



**“Real Time” with CMS  
Chicago**

Oluyemisi Ogunsanya  
*Chicago Local Engagement and  
Administration*

January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021

This presentation is being delivered by CMS Chicago LEA staff for informational purposes only and should not be construed as policy.

Information is up to date as to the date of the presentation.

# COVID-19 Fraud

As the number of people and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic grows, so do the scams associated with it. Scammers use public health emergencies as opportunities for new fraud schemes.

# Examples of Scams

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Testing
- Telemedicine
- Grants
- Government
- Investment Opportunities
- Contact tracing
- Vaccine

Be on the  
Lookout for  
Contact  
Tracing  
Scams



 [SMPresource.org](https://smpresource.org)

Contact tracers will:

- Be [State Department of Health](#) employees or their contractors.
- Only ask about [personal symptoms](#) and [individuals](#) a person has come into contact with.
- Only [ask if a person has insurance](#) so they can connect those who are not insured with resources. They [will never ask for specifics](#) about a person's insurance.
- Not be responsible for setting up a beneficiary's COVID tests.
- [Never collect payments](#) for COVID tests.

# COVID-19 Vaccine Fraud

# COVID-19 Vaccine Fraud

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG), and Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) are warning the public about several emerging fraud schemes related to COVID19 vaccines.

- Complaints of scammers using the public's interest in COVID-19 vaccines

[https://www.smpresource.org/Handler.ashx?Item\\_ID=EF448BE9-5DBD-463D-B0C1-BE2CD1450BAB](https://www.smpresource.org/Handler.ashx?Item_ID=EF448BE9-5DBD-463D-B0C1-BE2CD1450BAB)



Scammers rapidly alter their tactics and adapt their schemes to the changing landscape, and we anticipate that they will leverage the COVID-19 vaccine to prey on unsuspecting people.





# Potential Indicators

- Advertisements
  - Early access upon payment of a deposit or fee
  - Vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources
- Requests
  - Pay out of pocket
  - Put your name on a COVID-19 vaccine waiting list
  - Personal and/or medical information to determine recipients' eligibility to participate in clinical vaccine trials or obtain the vaccine

# Potential Indicators

- Offers
  - Undergo additional medical testing or procedures
  - Sell and/or ship doses of a vaccine, domestically or internationally
- Claims of FDA approval for a vaccine that cannot be verified
- Government or government officials require you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine

# Sources

## ■ Unsolicited or Unknown

- Mail (e.g. printed mailing, flyers)
- Email or Text
- Online (e.g. Social Media)
- Telephone call
- In-person

Note: Scammers may claim they are from a medical office, insurance company, or COVID-19 vaccine center

# Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine-related Fraud

- Consult your state's health department website for up-to-date information
- Check the CDC's website
- Check the FDA's website- Emergency use authorizations.
- Don't share your personal or health information with anyone.

# Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine-related Fraud

- Consult your doctor before undergoing any vaccination
- Check your medical bills and insurance explanation of benefits (EOBs)
  - Promptly report any errors
- Follow guidance and recommendations from the CDC and other trusted medical professionals.

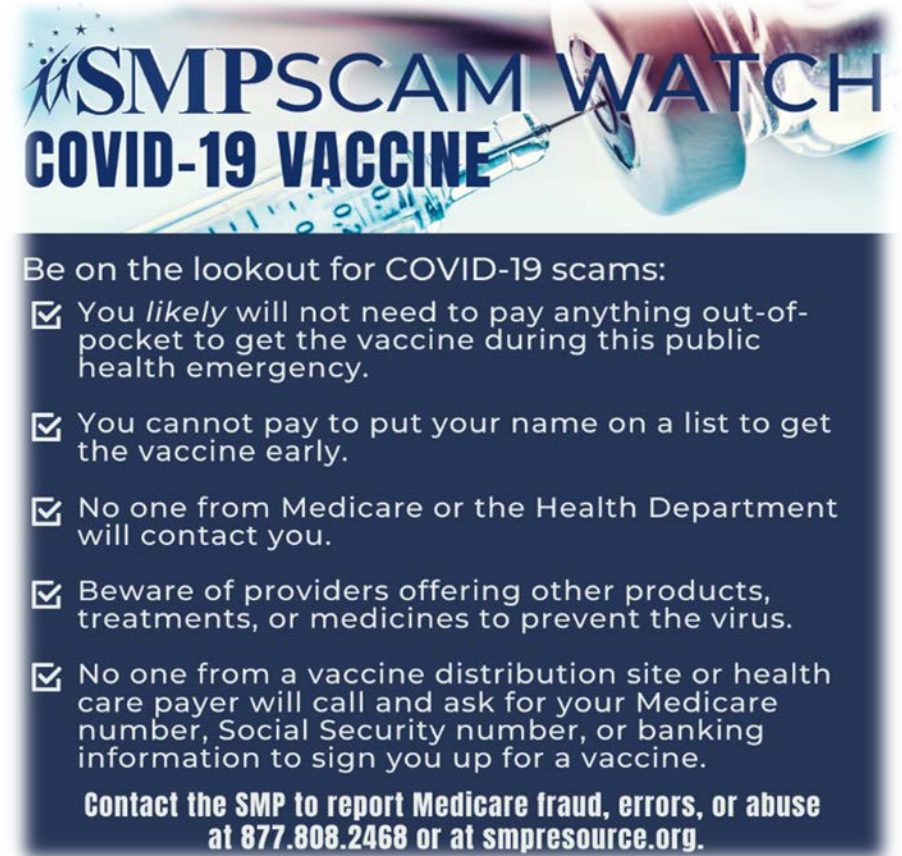
# COVID-19 Fraud Resources

## Infographics

- Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams
- COVID-19 Fraud (English) (Spanish)
- COVID-19 Contact Tracing Scams Infographic (English) (Spanish)
- COVID-19 Vaccine Scams
  - Light (English) (Spanish)
  - Dark(English) (Spanish)

## Videos

- Protect Yourself from COVID-19 Medicare Scams Video
- Common COVID-19 Medicare Scams



**SMPSCAM WATCH**  
**COVID-19 VACCINE**

Be on the lookout for COVID-19 scams:

- ☑ You *likely* will not need to pay anything out-of-pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- ☑ You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine early.
- ☑ No one from Medicare or the Health Department will contact you.
- ☑ Beware of providers offering other products, treatments, or medicines to prevent the virus.
- ☑ No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer will call and ask for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or banking information to sign you up for a vaccine.

**Contact the SMP to report Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse at 877.808.2468 or at [smpresource.org](https://smpresource.org).**

# Take Action: Report COVID-19 Fraud

**!** If you believe you have been the victim of COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to:

- HHS-OIG Hotline: **1-800-HHS-TIPS** | [tips.hhs.gov](https://tips.hhs.gov)
- FBI Hotline: **1-800-CALL-FBI** | [ic3.gov](https://ic3.gov)
- CMS/Medicare Hotline: **1-800-MEDICARE**



For accurate, up-to-date information about COVID-19, visit:

[oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus](https://oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus)  
[fbi.gov/coronavirus](https://fbi.gov/coronavirus)  
[justice.gov/coronavirus](https://justice.gov/coronavirus)



HHS  
Office of  
Inspector  
General



Federal  
Bureau of  
Investigation



Department  
of Justice



# Is it my turn to get the COVID-19 Vaccine?

States and territories will make the final decisions on who will get the vaccines and when. States are also working on their own specific vaccination plans.

- Contact your state's health department



# Protect Yourself...

Be vigilant and protect yourself from potential fraud concerning COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

# Resources

# Resources

ACL Fraud Alert: COVID-19 Scams

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/fraud-alert-covid-19-scams>

SMP COVID-19 Fraud Page

<https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/COVID-19-fraud.aspx>

SMP Consumer Fraud Alert: COVID-19

[https://www.smpresource.org/Handler.ashx?Item\\_ID=F27C608F-711D-4FF4-A87B-EBE61FE52890](https://www.smpresource.org/Handler.ashx?Item_ID=F27C608F-711D-4FF4-A87B-EBE61FE52890)

OIG COVID-19 Scammers Target Senior Citizens

<https://www.ksfr.org/post/covid-19-scammers-target-senior-citizens#stream/0>

# Resources

## Medicare

[https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud?utm\\_campaign=20201223\\_cvd\\_frd\\_gal&utm\\_content=english&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud?utm_campaign=20201223_cvd_frd_gal&utm_content=english&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

## Federal Trade Commission

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/12/covid-19-vaccines-are-pipeline-scammers-wont-be-far-behind>

## FDA Emergency Use Authorization

<https://www.fda.gov/emergency-preparedness-and-response/mcm-legal-regulatory-and-policy-framework/emergency-use-authorization>



# Recently Released

# COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign

- CMS COVID-19 Policy and Guidance Page  
<https://www.cms.gov/COVIDvax>
- CDC Covid-19 Vaccine Toolkit  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/toolkits/community-organization.html>
  - Fact Sheets
  - Frequently Asked Questions-FAQs
  - Slide deck
  - Poster/flyer templates
- Social Media Toolkit  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/vaccination-toolkit.html>



# CMS Flu Campaign

- CMS Flu Page <https://www.cms.gov/flu>
- CMS Flu Vaccine Partner Toolkit <https://www.cms.gov/outreach-education/partner-resources/flu-vaccine-partner-toolkit>

## CDC Toolkit

- Digital- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/toolkit/index.htm>
- Social- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/toolkit/social-media-toolkit.htm>

An Important Message from Medicare

**Getting your flu shot is more important than ever.**

**Flu shots are covered by Medicare.**

The flu can have serious complications, especially for people with diabetes, heart disease, and other medical conditions. Getting your shot can help you stay healthy, protect others, and stop the spread.

**GET YOUR SHOT NOW. IT'S NOT TOO LATE.**  
See your doctor, pharmacy, or other local providers.



 Paid for by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

# Questions and Comments

Please email us at

[ROCHIORA@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:ROCHIORA@cms.hhs.gov)

Thank you for joining us today!

Slides will be emailed to participants following today's session.



# Coming Attractions

***“TBD”***

February 3, 2021