

**March 31, 2021**

**\*\*\*CONSUMER ALERT\*\*\***

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES ILLINOIS RESIDENTS TO PROTECT AGAINST COVID VACCINATION CARD SCAMS**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today cautioned Illinois residents to be vigilant and protect themselves from scams and fraud related to COVID vaccination cards.

The COVID-19 vaccine is becoming more widely available to the general population, and Attorney General Raoul is warning people to avoid posting images of vaccination cards on social media. Raoul is advising people to protect their vaccination cards as they would other forms of personal information. According to the Attorney General's office, scammers can pull information from vaccination cards posted on social media and use it to get sensitive information about recipients of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Additionally, the Attorney General's office is evaluating reports of fake vaccination cards available for purchase online. Raoul urged people not to purchase fraudulent cards and instead report them to the Attorney General's office.

"People are understandably excited about the vaccine and the hope it offers, but they should refrain from posting pictures of their vaccine cards on social media, as thieves can use the information on the cards to access and steal additional personal information," Raoul said. "Anyone who is a victim of a COVID vaccine scam or vaccination card-related identity theft should contact my office."

Attorney General Raoul cautioned that scammers can use names, birthdates, the location of the vaccination and metadata from photos of COVID-19 vaccination cards posted online to obtain contact information of vaccine recipients. The scammer could then contact the recipient or use information from the recipient's card and social media profile to steal other personal information.

Raoul encourages people to take steps to protect themselves:

- **Do not post a picture of your vaccination card** on social media. Instead, post a picture of the sticker received after you are vaccinated, as it does not contain personal information.
- **Do not pay money** for COVID-19 vaccination cards, vaccines or treatments on the internet or from an online pharmacy. You should not have to pay any amount of money out of pocket in order to receive the vaccine. Everyone will be able to receive the vaccine, even if they do not have health insurance.
- **Ignore online, phone and text offers** for the COVID-19 vaccine or vaccination cards.
- **Delete emails and texts** that promise or offer access to COVID-19 treatments or cards, and do not click on any links contained in such emails as they may place malware on your devices.
- **Check with your local health department** for vaccine availability and for a list of local medical providers offering the COVID-19 vaccine.
- If you register to receive a notification when you are eligible to receive the vaccine, be sure **you know by what method you will be contacted to schedule an appointment**, whether email, text or phone call. If you are unsure whether a contact is legitimate, look up the provider's phone number independently to return the call. Never give out personal information in response to unsolicited phone calls.

Attorney General Raoul is urging people to avoid websites that claim to sell doses of the COVID-19 vaccine or vaccination cards. Illinois public health officials are overseeing the vaccine's distribution, and residents will be able to receive the vaccine only through a designated health or vaccine clinic. Consumers also should be aware that Medicare or Medicaid will not call seniors or residents to proactively offer the COVID-19 vaccine. Residents should consult their health care providers or local health departments for guidance in determining when the vaccine will be available to them. A list of local health departments is available on the [Illinois Department of Public Health's website](#).

Raoul also encourages people to be aware that while they cannot be charged for the vaccine itself, some providers may charge consultation or other administrative fees. While allowed, such fees must be billed to a patient's health insurance, and consumers should not have to pay for a vaccine at the time of service.

Additional information is available free of charge on the Illinois Attorney General's website and on the Illinois Department of Public Health's website. Individuals can report a scam by calling the Attorney General's Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1-800-386-5438 (Chicago), 1-800-243-0618 (Springfield), or 1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale), or by [filing an online complaint](#).