



Department of Justice

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FEDERAL AND STATE OFFICIALS ADVISE WISCONSINITES THAT MAKING OR BUYING FAKE COVID-19 VACCINE CARDS IS ILLEGAL

MADISON, WIS. – Timothy M. O'Shea, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, joins Richard G. Frohling, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, and Karen Timberlake, Secretary-designee and Anthony Baize, Inspector General of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) to advise the public that any act of creating, distributing, selling, or buying of fake COVID-19 vaccination record cards and any act of forging COVID-19 vaccination information is illegal and punishable under federal law.

The unauthorized use of an official government agency's seal, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is a crime and may be punishable under federal law under Title 18 United States Code, Section 1017, and other applicable laws.

"COVID-19 vaccines provide important protection for all of us when we are at school, attending public events, using mass transit, at the workplace, or attending a place of worship. Those who might claim to be vaccinated when they are not are putting themselves and their loved ones at risk of contracting COVID-19," said Secretary-designee Karen Timberlake. "Get vaccinated, encourage your friends and family to do the same, and add an extra layer of protection by wearing a mask in public places including for teachers, staff and students in our schools."

DHS also reminds Wisconsinites to not post vaccine cards on social media as the information could be stolen to commit fraud.

"If you have not been vaccinated, do not make your own cards or buy fake cards," said Inspector General Anthony Baize. "If you were vaccinated and your card was not filled out correctly, do not fill in the card yourself. Instead, call your vaccine provider."

"Public and private institutions, including employers, universities, schools, and businesses, need to be able to rely on the legitimacy of COVID-19 vaccine cards. Our

office will use all available tools to prosecute individuals who knowingly falsify vaccine cards,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Richard Frohling.

“Legitimate COVID-19 vaccine cards – like the vaccines themselves – are crucial tools to prevent illness and death. People who are foolish or selfish (or both) enough to supply bogus vaccination cards, allowing others to circumvent COVID-19 curtailment efforts, will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law,” said Timothy M. O’Shea, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin.

If you know or suspect that any healthcare provider, pharmacy, private business, or Wisconsin resident is creating, distributing, selling, buying or forging COVID-19 vaccination cards in-person or online, please report such conduct to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Office of Inspector General (877-865-3432 or www.reportfraud.wisconsin.gov); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (1-800-HHS-TIPS or www.oig.hhs.gov); or the Internet Crime Complaint Center (www.ic3.gov).

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