

Reminder That COVID-19 Fraud and Related Schemes Still Abound

Richard P. Kusserow | September 23, 2021

Key Points:

- **DOJ and OIG continue to issue warnings about fraud schemes.**
- **Consumers should remain alert.**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Department of Justice (DOJ) continue to issue fraud alerts about scammers who are using telemarketing calls, text messages, social media platforms, and door-to-door visits to perpetrate COVID-19-related scams. These scams include offering COVID-19 tests, HHS grants, and Medicare prescription cards in exchange for personal details. Both the OIG and DOJ warn against providing personal, medical, or financial details in exchange for vaccine information and indicate that individuals should only obtain vaccinations from trusted providers. The OIG has also [specified](#) that legitimate contact tracers will never ask for a Medicare number, request financial information, attempt to set up a COVID-19 test, or collect payment information for such a test.

The DOJ has further provided [guidance](#) urging consumers to be wary of the following:

- Requests for personal or health information from parties other than known medical professionals.
- Unsolicited email, telephone, or in-person contacts providing advice on COVID-19 treatment.
- Calls and emails from individuals claiming to be employees of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or Department of the Treasury.
- Robocalls making offers to sell respiratory masks or other medical devices.
- Unsolicited requests for Medicare information in return for COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Calls that seek donations for charitable organizations and request bank account information.
- Calls that claim the recipient received an overpayment of stimulus funds and demand a “refund” of the difference.
- Threats of adverse consequences like fines, forfeiture, or arrest for refusing to engage in transactions.
- Efforts to divert payments via fake emails that appear to be from trusted sources.
- Any requests or demands for monetary payments.

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