

MDS Alert

Compliance and Safety: Beware Fake Vaccination Cards

With the Food and Drug Administration issuing full approval for one COVID-19 vaccine, the incidence of forged COVID-19 vaccination cards may continue to rise.

Background: Fraudsters are selling fake cards on a variety of social media sites and "the dark web," reports the Wall Street Journal. "While we do not have definitive numbers, we are seeing more of these types of schemes recently," a Justice Department spokesman told the Journal.

What's to keep bad-apple healthcare providers from issuing counterfeit COVID-19 vaccination cards to the vaccine-hesitant? Hopefully enforcement by federal agencies.

Case in point: Authorities recently arrested California-licensed homeopathic doctor Juli A. Mazi for her alleged scheme to sell homeoprophylaxis immunization pellets and to falsify COVID-19 vaccination cards by making it appear that customers had received the FDA-authorized Moderna vaccine, the Department of Justice says in a release.



"The defendant allegedly created counterfeit COVID-19 vaccination cards and instructed her customers to falsely mark that they had received a vaccine, allowing them to circumvent efforts to contain the spread of the disease," Deputy Attorney General **Lisa Monaco** says in a release. "The Department of Justice and its law enforcement partners are committed to protecting the American people from fraudsters during this national emergency."

Mazi told patients that the pellets contained the COVID-19 virus and would create an antibody response in the immune system, according to the feds. Mazi provided customers with specific Moderna vaccine lot numbers to enter onto the cards and with instruction on how to select the purported dates on which they had received the Moderna vaccines to evade suspicion, prosecutors say.

"According to the complaint, instead of disseminating valid remedies and information, Juli Mazi profited from unlawfully peddling unapproved remedies, stirring up false fears, and generating fake proof of vaccinations," Northern District of California Acting U.S. Attorney **Stephanie Hind** says in the release.

"Working closely with our law enforcement partners, our agency will continue to investigate such fraudsters who recklessly endanger the public's health during the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis," HHS Office of Inspector General Special Agent in Charge **Steven J. Ryan** says in the release.