

MDS Alert

COVID-19: DNS Pleads Guilty to Forging Vaccination Cards

The DNS may face 5 years in federal prison for the offense.

The feds continue to pursue COVID-19 fraudsters with a vengeance, and recent case highlights why falsifying vaccination cards is a bad idea.

Background: Tammy Hutson McDonald, 53, [former] director of nursing at a skilled nursing facility in Columbia, South Carolina, has pleaded guilty to lying to federal agents about producing fraudulent COVID-19 vaccination record cards.

McDonald provided false vaccination cards for various individuals, signifying they had received a dose of one of the COVID-19 vaccinations while knowing that they had not. When approached by federal agents and told that lying to a federal agent was a crime, she insisted she had never provided anyone with a false or incorrect vaccine card.



"The Defendant created a direct risk to the people of South Carolina by creating false vaccine documents for others to use, and she compounded this wrongdoing by lying to federal agents," said U.S. Attorney **Corey F. Ellis** in a release. "As a registered nurse, she knew better and owed more to her community. This felony conviction showcases that this office will continue to prosecute fraud related to the Coronavirus in all its forms."

"Vaccination record cards play an integral part in efforts to address the public health emergency," said Special Agent in Charge **Tamala E. Miles**, with the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for the Inspector General (OIG). "HHS-OIG will continue to hold accountable any providers who undermine public health measures and put the health of others at risk by distributing these cards to unvaccinated individuals."

"COVID-19 related fraud has severe consequences, no matter the chosen scheme," said **Susan Ferensic**, the FBI Columbia field office's Special Agent in Charge. "Our investigators will continue to work diligently to turn over every stone in search of the truth, and we will hold individuals accountable for their crimes."

In addition to the maximum penalty of five years in federal prison, she may also face a fine of up to \$250,000, restitution, and three years of supervision. She awaits sentencing in September 2022.