



ITASCA MEDICAL CARE (IMCare)
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PROVIDER UPDATE

March 2021
#2021-04

To: IMCare Providers
From: Sarah Anderson, IMCare Director
Date: March 3, 2021
RE: COVID-19 Vaccine Fraud Alert

Providers play a key role in ensuring IMCare enrollees have up to date information regarding COVID-19. Providers are on the front lines and can help inform IMCare enrollees on issues regarding scams and fraud.

Unfortunately, in the midst of the current pandemic, criminals are taking advantage of people through a variety of scams. Please encourage your patients to be vigilant in protecting their information.

In January of 2021, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, Office of Investigations (HHS/OIG/OI) issued a healthcare fraud alert, regarding COVID-19 vaccines. This alert described how fraudsters may be engaged in schemes involving COVID-19 vaccines to Medicare beneficiaries, targeting beneficiaries in a number of ways, including via telemarketing calls, social media platforms, and door-to-door visits. The personal information collected could then be used to fraudulently bill Federal health care programs and the unapproved vaccines may cause harm to the beneficiaries.

Potential COVID-19 vaccine schemes are listed below:

- Advertisements or offers for early access to a vaccine upon payment of a deposit or fee
- Requests asking you to pay out of pocket to obtain the vaccine or to put your name on a COVID-19 vaccine waiting list
- Offers to undergo additional medical testing or procedures when obtaining a vaccine
- Marketers offering to sell and/or ship doses of a vaccine, domestically or internationally, in exchange for payment of a deposit or fee
- Unsolicited emails, telephone calls, or personal contact from someone claiming to be from a medical office, insurance company, or COVID-19 vaccine center requesting personal and/or medical information to determine recipients' eligibility to participate in clinical vaccine trials or obtain the vaccine
- Claims of FDA approval for a vaccine that cannot be verified
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources

- Individuals contacting you in person, by phone, or by email to tell you the government or government officials require you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you are aware of any of these types of fraudulent activity, please report and/or encourage IMCare enrollees to report information to IMCare Compliance at IMCareCompliance@co.itasca.mn.us.

Information is changing rapidly, please continue to monitor provider updates and our website for the most accurate, up to date information. If you have questions, please reach out or encourage members to reach out, to our call center at 218-327-6188, toll-free at 1-800-843-9536 or email imcare.office@co.itasca.mn.us.