

**CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES A WARNING: BE WARY OF COVID VACCINE
SCAMMERS
(Last updated on January 14, 2021)**

The City of Chicago and Chicago Public Health Department (CDPH) are warning residents about COVID-19 vaccine scams. If you or someone you know gets calls, texts, or emails offering early access to a COVID-19 vaccine, it is NOT legitimate, it is a scam, and you should not respond.

Safe and legitimate vaccines are being distributed through the Chicago Public Health Department (CDPH) using a phased approach, starting with priority access populations like health care workers of all types and long-term care facilities residents and staff. In the coming weeks, CDPH will also start offering vaccination for essential workers and those over 65, with an eye toward equity among hardest-hit populations.

Scammers may pretend they are from the World Health Organization, or the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or even Governor Pritzker's or Mayor's Lightfoot's office. They may offer to ship a COVID-19 vaccination directly to your home, or provide early access to city sites for a price, or be selling special cold storage units to keep your vaccine safe.

Nobody needs to pay for a COVID vaccine – they are free and will eventually be available to all.

As COVID-19 vaccine distribution begins, here are signs of potential scams:

- Patients are asked to pay out of pocket to get vaccine. You will not have to pay for the vaccine itself, although you may be charged a small fee for administration of the vaccine—any offer to “sell” a vaccine is a scam
- Patients are asked to pay to put their name on a vaccine waiting list or to get early access.
- Unsolicited e-mails, text messages, advertisements, or telephone calls offering to sell COVID-19 vaccines.
- Marketers offering to sell or ship doses of the vaccine for payment.
- Before responding to communications from a doctor, pharmacy, health department, or other health care practitioner, verify the source of that communication.
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Protect Yourself. Do not give out your personal information to unknown sources.

Remember, never give out your social security number, do not pay for a vaccine or buy and send gift cards, do not reply to calls or texts suggesting to you “sign up” for a Chicago vaccination list.

The vaccine will not be available to the general public for several months, and it will always be free of charge.

Consumers and healthcare providers can report any fraudulent COVID-19 products to:

- HHS-OIG Hotline: 1-800-HHS-TIPS; [hhs.gov](https://www.hhs.gov) COVID-19
- FBI Hotline: 1-800-CALL-FBI; [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)
- CMS/Medicare Hotline: 1-800-MEDICARE
- Covid19vaccines@cityofchicago.org – for COVID19 vaccine only