



Stephen M. Wagstaffe, District Attorney
COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

AL SERRATO
CHIEF DEPUTY

SHIN-MEE CHANG • SEAN GALLAGHER • JAMES WADE
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

400 COUNTY CENTER, 3rd FLOOR, REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA 94063 (650) 363-4636

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: January 21, 2021

TO: MEDIA MEMBERS

FROM: Stephen M. Wagstaffe, District Attorney

SUBJECT: Be Alert for Scams Related to COVID-19 Vaccines

San Mateo County District Attorney Stephen M. Wagstaffe today advised San Mateo County residents to be alert for scams related to the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

Wearing masks, social distancing and frequent hand washing continue to be important in fighting the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The development, approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines are the next crucial steps. Unfortunately, scammers may try to exploit the uncertainty and anxiety associated with emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic to take people's money or steal their identities. County residents should be alert to potential scams, including the following:

- Someone offers to move you into an earlier group to get the vaccine for a fee.
- Someone tries to sell you a place on a COVID vaccine waiting list.
- Someone on the street, online, on social media, or knocking on your door tries to sell you a shot of vaccine.

- You get calls, texts, or emails about the vaccine. The caller asks for your personal or financial information. It can be your Social Security, bank account or credit card number. NEVER share these numbers or other personal information with an unknown caller or in a text or email.
- You see ads for fake vaccines or “miracle cures” using vitamins or other dietary supplements. Scammers promote these even though they have not been proven to work. The FDA has issued warning letters to many companies for selling products that claim to prevent, treat, or cure COVID-19.
- If anyone that isn’t well known in your community (like a doctor, a health care clinic, a pharmacy, a County health program) offers you a vaccine – think twice and check with your doctor.

Residents and businesses can protect themselves from becoming victims of COVID -19 related scams by relying on vaccine and other medical information only from trusted sources, such as their personal health care providers and county, state and federal public health officials;

A person who would like to report a COVID-19 related scam in San Mateo County should contact the District Attorney’s Office by calling (650) 363-4651 or at <https://da.smcgov.org/consumer-and-environmental-protection> or calling the local police department.