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State reminds public: Faking vax cards is a crime *Fraudulent use endangers public health, safety*

SANTA FE -- The state of New Mexico is reminding the public that it is a crime to falsify or fraudulently use a CDC vaccination card because it puts the health and safety of others at great risk, including children who are too young to be vaccinated.

As the Delta variant of the novel coronavirus surges nationally, a cottage industry has developed to provide fake vaccination cards, which some unscrupulous individuals who refuse to be vaccinated are using to avoid face mask requirements or other COVID safety protocols.

“This national trend of providing imitation vaccination cards is dangerous, and it’s carelessly placing countless New Mexicans at risk,” Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said. “Don’t do it. If you do, New Mexico law enforcement and criminal justice agencies are poised to address that behavior with the full weight of the law. Get vaccinated instead and help protect our state -- schedule an appointment today at VaccineNM.org.”

Anyone who suspects fraudulent use of a vaccination card should report it immediately by calling the Department of Health at 1-833-551-0518 or by [submitting your concern through this online portal](#).

“Getting vaccinated is an opportunity to protect ourselves, our children, our seniors, and our friends and neighbors who may be immunocompromised.

Falsifying vaccine cards does just the opposite. Please, get vaccinated today,” said Dr. David Scrase, Acting Department of Health Secretary.

Reports will be forwarded to the appropriate state or federal law enforcement agency for investigation and possible civil and criminal enforcement.

“These fake COVID vaccine cards threaten the health of our communities. Any fraudulent cards need to be reported to law enforcement immediately,” said Department of Public Safety Interim Secretary Tim Johnson.

Individuals who violate state Public Health Orders or the New Mexico Public Health Act may be subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 per violation and up to six months in jail. Making or using fake vaccination cards is also a federal crime if it includes the unauthorized use of the seal of an official government agency.

At present, state guidance allows students and staff in middle schools and high schools to go mask-less in school buildings if they show proof of being vaccinated. Those who are unvaccinated or unwilling to show proof of vaccination are required to wear masks, and many districts have enacted stricter policies requiring masks for everyone.

“These policies were formulated with expert advice in order to allow as much personal freedom as possible while still protecting children from this dangerous virus. Flouting these requirements puts our communities and our youngest at great risk amid the rapid spread of the Delta variant and cannot be tolerated,” Public Education Secretary Ryan Stewart said.

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