



Public Health Crisis Fraud

As seen during the COVID-19 pandemic, fraudsters have made intentional misrepresentations for illegal financial gain. Indicators of potential fraud schemes involving VA or veterans likely to continue or emerge during other public health crises include the following:

- Laboratories or other entities contend that additional tests were completed together with tests for COVID-19 or other targeted public health testing to bundle and bill them at higher rates.
- Treatments and/or testing kits are not approved or authorized by the Food and Drug Administration or do not carry approved/authorized manufacturer's identifiers, such as legitimate lot numbers or QR codes (which can sometimes be confirmed on the manufacturer website).
- Advertisements are made on social media or links are included in texts from unknown senders.
- Offers are made to provide blank or manufactured documentation or vaccination cards.
- Promised treatments are cancelled or not scheduled and/or testing kits never materialize, and help numbers or other contacts are disconnected or unresponsive.
- Personal identifiable information (PII), such as social security numbers or financial information, names and birthdates, or passwords, are requested in order for the patient to receive a treatment or test, particularly if there is pressure to provide it immediately. These requests can come from individuals offering tests, treatment, or vaccines; conducting surveys; and claiming to be contact tracers.
- Individuals are asked to pay out-of-pocket for vaccines or treatment medications, or to pay a fee to be placed on a waiting list or to gain early access. These offers are often advertised through social media, emails that appear personalized, telephone calls, or through other unsolicited sources.
- An entity or individual will offer to sell or ship doses of vaccines or medications.
- During a telehealth appointment, a care provider or vendor tries to sell additional products or services.

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