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Attorney General Balderas Warns New Mexicans to Beware of COVID-19 Vaccine Scams

Santa Fe, NM-- Attorney General Hector Balderas today issued a consumer safety advisory to New Mexican consumers about the increased proliferation of COVID-19 vaccine related scams, as vaccine rollout begins. Pharmaceutical companies and law enforcement entities across the globe are warning of organized criminal elements that are taking advantage of the vaccine rollout. These scammers are defrauding and enticing people into purchasing fake COVID-19 vaccines. In response to these scams, Attorney General Balderas warns New Mexican families to be vigilant in seeking or receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

“We will not tolerate fraud and scams in the delivery of this critical vaccine,” said Attorney General Balderas. “Unfortunately during this pandemic we have seen the rise of individuals who are looking to take advantage of the fear and vulnerability of our families in these uncertain times; but New Mexicans should remain confident in the advice of healthcare professionals and the law enforcement community, who are working diligently to make sure we all stay safe.”

The Office of the Attorney General, working in partnership with law enforcement entities across the country, warns of potential criminal activity in relation to the falsification, theft and illegal advertising of COVID-19 and flu vaccines, with the pandemic having already triggered unprecedented opportunistic and predatory criminal behavior. This includes crimes where individuals have been advertising, selling, and administering fake vaccines.

As a number of COVID-19 vaccines come closer to approval and global distribution, ensuring the safety of the supply chain and identifying illicit websites selling fake products will be essential. Criminal networks will also be targeting unsuspecting members of the public via fake websites and false cures, which could pose a significant risk to their health, even their lives. According to INTERPOL’s Cybercrime Unit, it has identified 3,000 websites associated with online pharmacies suspected of selling illicit medicines and medical devices, and around 1,700 of those websites contained cyber threats, especially phishing and spamming malware.

To avoid falling victim to scams, it is important to be vigilant, be skeptical, and be safe, as offers which appear too good to be true usually are. Always check with health authorities for the latest health advice in relation to COVID-19. New Mexicans should report anything suspicious they see related to the COVID-19 vaccine from a source other than a healthcare professional to their local law enforcement officials; the Office of the Attorney General at 1-844-255-9210 or nmag.gov; or the New Mexico Department of Health at 1-855-600-3453.

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