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### OIG: Fake Vaccine Cards, Lab Tests Are Among Evolving COVID-19 Scams

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By Nina Youngstrom

It's "mind boggling" to Elton Malone, assistant HHS inspector general for investigations, that some people would rather pay \$200 for a fraudulent COVID-19 vaccine card than get a bona fide vaccine that protects them from the deadly virus for free. Phony vaccine cards are one type of fraud OIG is seeing in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic. It's "prevalent," Malone said, but it's not the only kind of fraud related to vaccines. They're also being diverted by warehouse workers in charge of disposing of expired vaccines and by truck drivers who are supposed to drive them to the offices of medical professionals.

"One thing about this pandemic is it was opportunistic for fraudsters," Malone said Aug. 6 at the Philadelphia Regional Healthcare Compliance Conference hosted by Health Care Compliance Association.<sup>[1]</sup> They have found ways to exploit people and payers to make a buck, he said, and their methods change fast and furiously. "When we think we have a good grasp of a particular scheme, they come up with something else," Malone said.

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