Whether and How to Develop a COVID-19 Vaccine Credential

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy memo outlines a series of decision points that the State of Outdoorsville should take into account when deciding whether to implement a COVID-19 vaccine credential. We believe the *State of Outdoorsville should: (a) hold off on developing a vaccine credential system until there is demonstrated interest from event organizers, businesses, and schools in using it; and (b) convene a cross-section of business leaders, school leaders, and event organizers to determine whether the credential would be used.* If the State is able to show that there is enough interest in a vaccine credential's use, it should move forward with building a system that follows a set of pre-specified privacy and security criteria.

BACKGROUND

With COVID-19 vaccines now available to all Outdoorsville adults, the State is considering whether to implement a COVID-19 vaccine credentials system. A COVID-19 vaccine credentials system would theoretically allow Outdoorsville residents to show their proof of vaccination to schools, businesses, event organizers, and other entities that may request it. The State's ultimate goal in implementing a credential system is to minimize the incidence of COVID-19 in Outdoorsville's population, keep Outdoorsville communities safe, and increase confidence amongst the population as they get back to work, school, and attend gatherings.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON *WHETHER* TO BUILD A VACCINE CREDENTIAL

First, we recommend that Outdoorsville utilize the attached decision

[sheet](#) to determine whether a vaccine credentials system is necessary and technically feasible. The decision sheet requires Outdoorsville to pass a series of "tests" before building a vaccine credential system. Currently, Outdoorsville fails on the second of these five tests — proving that there is actual demand for a COVID-19 credential.

1. Our first test asks *whether Outdoorsville has achieved ubiquitous access to the vaccine*. Outdoorsville should hold on releasing a digital credential system until all citizens have had ample opportunity to receive a vaccine. Though Outdoorsville has not yet achieved ubiquitous access, it is likely to do so within the next few weeks. Thus, we believe Outdoorsville will eventually pass this test.

2. Next, we ask *whether Outdoorsville event organizers, businesses, and schools are interested in a digital vaccine credential system*. Outdoorsville fails on this test. There is currently no evidence that businesses or schools wish to require customers to show proof of vaccination before entering their facilities.

3. We then ask *whether Outdoorsville has determined there is sufficient demand from its residents for a vaccine credential*. [Preliminary polling](#) shows that there is at least some interest from US residents to pursue a voluntary digital vaccine credential. Based on the information available to us, we believe Outdoorsville passes this test.

4. Tests four and five ask whether Outdoorsville has the *technical capabilities and data needed* to build a vaccine credentials system. Since the State of Outdoorsville currently has a Patient Portal and patient identity system that holds much of the data needed to build a vaccine credential, it would be fairly easy for the state to deploy one if it chooses to do so. The State likely passes these tests.

Since the State does not have enough data to prove that they can pass our second test, it should hold off on building a credential. *It should instead convene a cross-section of private sector leaders and educators to determine whether a vaccine credential would be used by enough businesses, schools, and event planners.* Until then, the State should not use government dollars on a system that might not be in demand.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO BUILD A VACCINE CREDENTIAL

If Outdoorsville is able to demonstrate sufficient demand for a digital credential, we recommend that the state move forward with doing so. However, any digital credential system needs to be user-friendly, secure, and privacy-preserving. In that vein, we also attach a list of technical and privacy requirements that the state should abide by should it choose to deploy a vaccine credential. These technical and privacy requirements include:

1. Having the vaccine credential system be an *opt in* process for individuals;

2. Ensuring that the vaccine credentials abide by data minimization principles;

3. Ensuring that third parties are unable to access confidential vaccine information;

4. Ensuring that the data in the vaccine credential are used for proving vaccine status and nothing more; and

5. Ensuring that the system utilizes a QR code system to show vaccine information.

These requirements will ensure that an Outdoorsville digital vaccine credential safeguards residents' private health information and will be user-friendly.