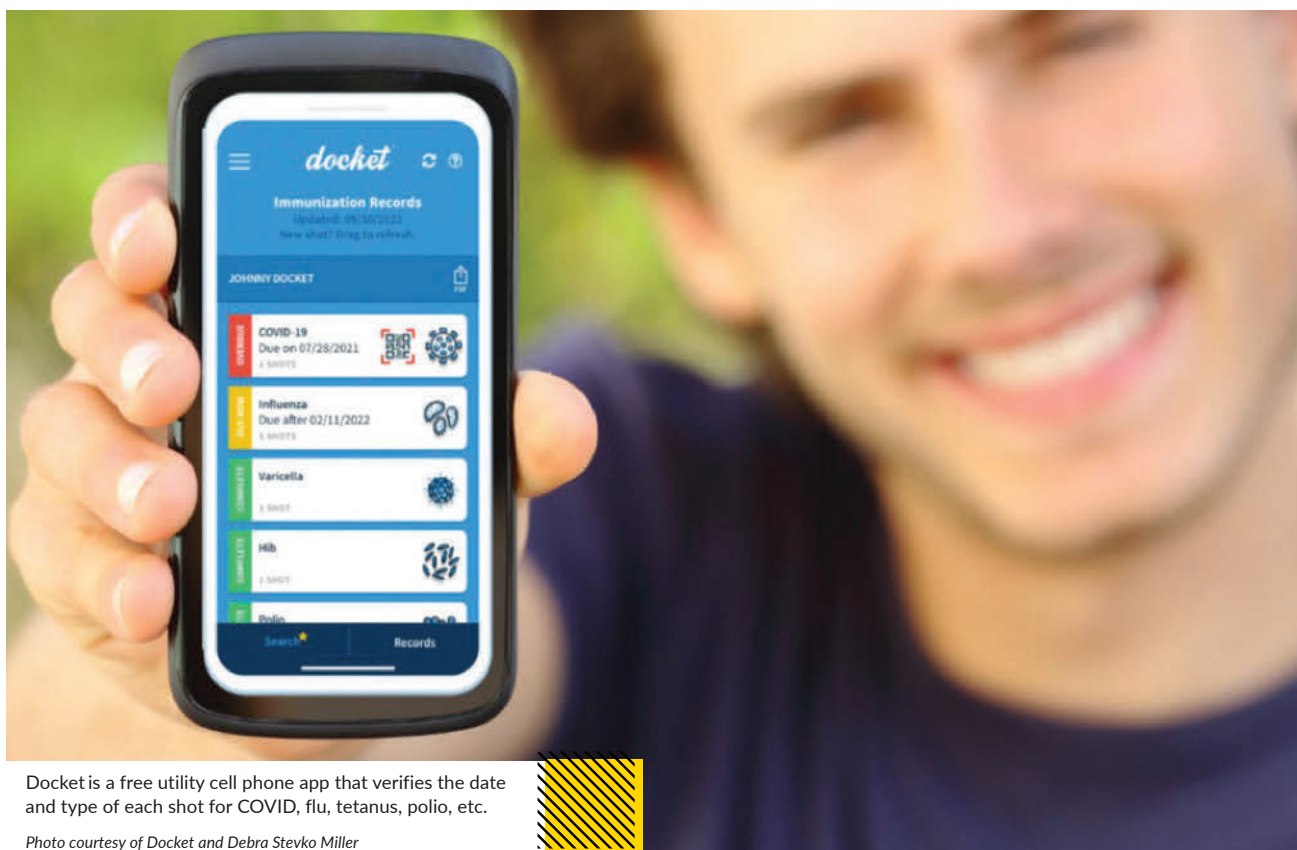




Docket is a free utility cell phone app that verifies the date and type of each shot for COVID, flu, tetanus, polio, etc.

Photo courtesy of Docket and Debra Stevko Miller

A HANDY HEALTH APP

BY DEBRA STEVCO MILLER



The Docket app is a great way to prove your vaccine status wherever needed.

Photo courtesy of Getty Images

During the COVID-19 pandemic when vaccinations were finally available, everyone who rolled up their sleeves for their first shot received a vaccine card, which recorded the date and lot number of the vaccine. This index-sized card was initially required to enter a building or attend events, as one way to prove vaccination against the virus, as well as to ensure safety and possible spread of the contagious disease.

Toting the card around meant keeping it secure without misplacing or damaging it, so the card could be presented or updated by a pharmacist or other health care provider. But then, along came a digital option to replace the hard copy: the Docket app.

Developed by a couple of software engineer friends, the free utility cell phone app verifies the date and type of each shot for COVID, flu, tetanus, polio, etc. Providers enter the patient's vaccination information into the state of New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS), then patients can access their vax record via Docket. Vaccinations administered from some

out-of-state providers can also be uploaded into the NJIS, according to the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH).

The app utilizes encrypted storage on your phone so that hackers cannot access any records, even if the phone is lost or stolen.

Creators Michael Perretta and Nathan Scott originally developed the app to help parents track immunizations for their children in a pilot program that rolled out in Utah in May 2020. It was the monetary award they won in 2017 in the Move Health Data Forward Challenge, sponsored by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, that enabled them to support their startup.

"Working on Docket was a great way for me to feel like I helped solve an urgent problem," said Perretta, Docket CEO, who took advantage of the pandemic lockdown to improve the software's functionality and expand its utilization.

According to the New Jersey Department of Health, over 1.3 million residents in New Jersey have downloaded Docket from an app store onto their cell phones to view their inoculation records.

Photos courtesy of Docket



To prove her COVID vaccine status when traveling in 2021, Hillsborough resident Debbie Sheldon pulled up the application on her cellphone to enter SoFi and Dodger stadiums in Los Angeles.

"My son and I had to provide our documentation at each event," Sheldon said. "With the app, it made it so easy to prove we were vaccinated. It was a great benefit for us."

Another advantage is that family members can share records on the app, including their children's immunizations, which means not having to contact a provider or health department to keep up to date.

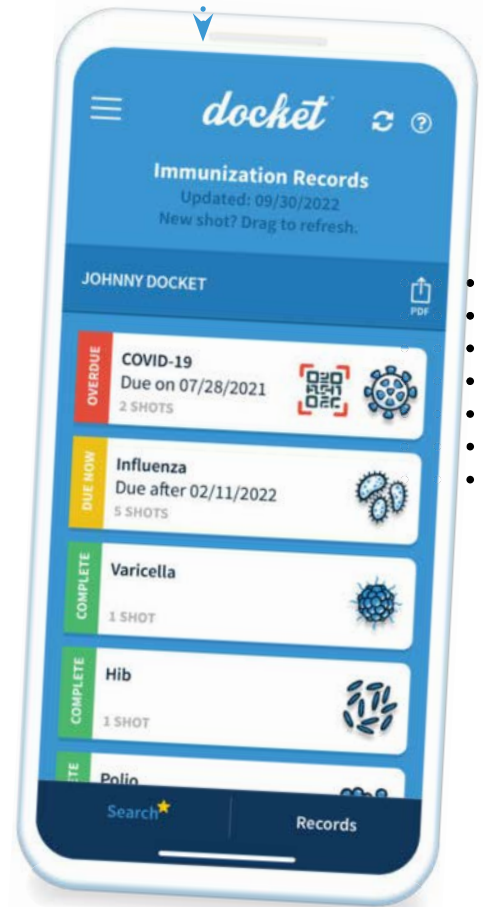
The NJDOH chose Docket as the best option to meet the needs of its residents after evaluating several others. The app is approved by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"As a team, we're just very blessed to be working with such mission-driven folks who are dedicated to public health, not only in New Jersey, but across all our state partners," Perretta said. "It's a big responsibility for the residents of states we partner with, so we take our work very seriously."

JUST HOW HANDY IS THE APP?

“My son and I had to provide our documentation” at stadiums in southern California. “With the app, it made it so easy to prove we were vaccinated. It was a great benefit for us.”

— Hillsborough resident Debbie Sheldon



For 2023, the Docket team looks to enhance the app with reminders, additional language downloads and access on other platforms. The app screen displays educational and engaging images alongside each record, and users can customize the avatar appearing next to their name.

"There's a lot of potential to build on top of what we've developed so far," Perretta said. "On the consumer side, we want to make it easier for parents to stay on top of their kids' immunizations."

According to NJDOH, over 1.3 million residents in New Jersey have downloaded Docket from an app store onto their cell phones to view their inoculation records. The app is currently available in several languages, including English, Spanish, Ukrainian and Hindi.

If assistance is needed in accessing your records after downloading the app, consult your health care provider or visit tinyurl.com/NJDocketFaq for more information. ❖