On the Front Lines of COVID Fraud with the Senior Medicare Patrol

Presented by:
US Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Community Living and
SMP National Resource Center
Presentation Objectives

- SMP and SHIP Overview
- COVID-19 Fraud Schemes
- SMP Statistics
- Emerging and Future Trends
- Resources and Q&A
SMP & SHIP OVERVIEW
What is the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)?

Mission

To empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.

- Grant-based program administered by ACL since 1997
- 54 State Projects: One in every state, DC, PR, GU, and USVI
  - 5,720 Team Members nationally
- SMP’s goals:
  - To prevent Medicare fraud before it happens via public outreach and one-on-one assistance and
  - To report suspected issues as quickly as possible to the proper investigators
- SMP is known as a trusted OIG & CMS partner and provides a direct link from Medicare beneficiaries to fraud investigators
- SMP Resource Center: www.SMPResource.org
State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

Mission

Our mission is to empower, educate, and assist Medicare-eligible individuals, their families, and caregivers through objective outreach, counseling, and training, to make informed health insurance decisions that optimize access to care and benefits.

- **54 Grantees**: One every state, DC, PR, & USVI (2/3 in State Units on Aging; 1/3 in Dept of Insurance)
- **Provide one-on-one assistance** to Medicare beneficiaries who prefer or need information, counseling, and enrollment assistance beyond what they are able to receive on their own through other sources
- **Built on over 3,300 local partnerships** with AAAs, CILs, senior centers, and other community organizations to host 14,000 team members (approx. 50% are volunteers)

SHIP Technical Assistance Center: [www.shiphelp.org](http://www.shiphelp.org)
SMP’s Role in Health Care Fraud Reporting

**PREVENT:** SMPs provide focused outreach and messaging designed to protect Medicare beneficiaries from Medicare fraud.

**DETECT:** As local trusted connections in the community the SMPs are often the first to hear of new issues as they begin to emerge.

**REPORT:** SMPs provide in-depth one-on-one assistance to Medicare beneficiaries and other complainants.
SMP Partnerships

• U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG)
• Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

Other partnerships
National Health Care Anti-fraud Association (NHCAA), USAging, EngAGED Center, National Counsel on Aging (NCOA), National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA), Centers for Medicare Advocacy (CMA), Coalition Against Insurance Fraud, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), SAGE, National Center on Law & Elder Rights (NCLER), etc...
• Promotes national visibility for the SMP program and helps the general public locate their state SMP project
• Provides a national website, social media, toll-free number, and info@ email
• Promotes SMP networking and the sharing of best practices
• Provides education and information about health care fraud, error, and abuse
• Develops new products and tools for use by the national SMP network
• Supports the national SMP performance measures and the SMP Information and Reporting System (SIRS)
• Provides training and technical assistance to SMPs
COVID-19 Fraud Schemes
Categories of COVID-19 Fraud

- Treatments, Testing, Cures, and Vaccines
- Pandemic Supplies and Equipment
- COVID-19 Related Medical Services
- Other Pandemic Related Fraud
Types of COVID-19 Fraud Reported to the SMP from March 2020 – July 2021
Treatments, Testing, Cures, and Vaccines

• Social Media Advertised Drive-Thru

• Testing at Group Homes, Large Events, Residential Areas ...and Rodeos

• COVID Curing Toothpaste and Pesticides (and other false treatments and cures)

https://twitter.com/us_fda/status/1429050070243192839
Broad Categories of COVID-19 Fraud

Identity Theft  Laboratory  Telemedicine  Pharmaceutical  Other Frauds
Identity Theft

PPE
Testing
Telemedicine & In-Person
New Medicare Card
Scheduled Vaccinations
Trials & Surveys

PROTECT YOURSELF

from medical identity theft

Do not give your Medicare number to ANYONE you do not know.
Laboratory

- Social Media Advertised Drive-Thru
- Testing at Group Homes, Large Events, Residential Areas, & Rodeos
- False/Incorrect COVID-19 Diagnosis
  - Hospitalization
  - SNFs
  - Death Certificate
- Add-On Laboratory Services to Testing, Treatment, or Vaccine Visit
Common Telemedicine Schemes

- Beneficiary Solicited via Robocall
- Contacted by Purported Telemedicine Provider
- Prescribed Medically Unnecessary DME, Genetic Test, or Other Service
- Medicare and/or Patient Billed by DME or Telemedicine Provider
- Patient Information Resold
Telemedicine

• Billing for Services Not Rendered
• Patient Recruitment
• Fraudulent Credentials
• RPM
Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)

- Medically Unnecessary RPM
- Inappropriate Devices
- Grant Fraud
- Revenue Maximization
Pharmaceutical/Prescription Drug Schemes

- Prescription Switching, Shortages, Expired Drugs
- Refill Schemes
- Billing for Prescriptions not Delivered or Received
- Opioids

https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/Pharmacy-and-Prescription-Drug-Fraud.aspx
Other COVID-19 Related Fraud

Related Medical Services
Health Insurance Schemes
Death/Funeral Benefits
Medical Supply Scams
SMP COVID-19 Complaints 2020
Top States for SMP COVID-19 Complaints

California
Florida
Ohio
New York
Arkansas
Arizona
Iowa
Texas
Louisiana
Michigan
Tennessee
SMP Comparison of Top Ten States for Genetic Testing and COVID-19 Complaints

GENETIC TESTING 2019

COVID 2020
Methods of Contact

- In-Person
- Text and Telephone
- Internet
- Mail and Print

Social engineering and cyberbullying
Emerging and Future Trends
Current Vaccine Scams

- Priority Patient Scam
- Scheduled Vaccinations
- Office Visit Schemes
- In-Home Vaccinations
- Vaccine Trials & Surveys

Be on the Lookout for COVID-19 Survey Scams

- Legitimate surveys won't offer money, gifts, or any incentive to take them.
- Legitimate surveys won't include urgency such as "You must take this survey in the next hour or it will expire."
- Check links by hovering over them. If they seem long and suspicious, don't click them.
- Check logos, language, and phone numbers. If anything seems "doctored" or doesn't match what you see on a legitimate vaccine provider site, don't click any provided links.

Contact the SMP to report Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse at 877.808.2468 or at smpresource.org.
Vaccine Trial and Vaccine Survey Examples

**Congratulations!**

You have been selected as a vaccine research subject! Please complete this short 30-second survey about COVID VACCINES in exchange for one of our consumer offer rewards! *(offer promo value up to $90).*

**VACCINE RESEARCH SURVEY**

$90 PROMO REWARDS AVAILABLE

Those who complete the survey will get:
- Choice of up to 10 offer rewards
- Value up to $90
- Reduced shipping prices

Get Started Now!

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**Thank you for completing the survey!**

Because you helped provide extremely valuable consumer data, you may now choose some of the following exclusive rewards below.

Please understand that these products are currently in **extremely high demand**, and if you leave this survey without claiming your reward, we have no choice but to give another random visitor a chance to participate in our surveys rewards program.

iPad Pro®
Get the New iPad Pro + Magic Keyboard!

Reg Price $699.99
$0.00 - Pay Only S/H
Shipping: $19.73
Left in Stock: (3)

CLAIM REWARD
BOLOs

- Vaccine verification and passports (especially apps and QR codes)
- COVID-19 boosters
- Long-hauler treatment clinics
- Transportation scams
- Pass-through or direct billing
Marketing Violations and Enrollment Fraud

Medicare Open Enrollment

Marketing Violations

There are limits on how Medicare plans can contact you. Medicare plans:

- Can't call you if you don't have a relationship with their company.
- Can't send you emails if you haven't agreed to this form of contact.
- Can't come to your home to sell Medicare products without an invitation.
- Can't leave flyers, door hangers, or leaflets on your car or at your home, unless you missed a scheduled appointment.

Open Enrollment Ahead

Marketing Violations

Report potential Medicare marketing violations and/or enrollment fraud, errors, or abuse if:

- You receive an unsolicited phone call from a company you have no prior relationship with.
- A company represents itself as coming from or sent by Medicare, Social Security, or Medicaid.
- You receive information such as leaflets, flyers, door hangers, etc., on your car or at your residence from a company you did not have an appointment with.
- An agent returns uninvited to your residence after missing an appointment with them earlier.
- You signed up for a plan after being told by a company that certain prescriptions or services were covered, but after reviewing your EOB, you found they were not covered by the plan and you received a bill instead.

877.808.2468

SMPresource.org

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Resources & Links
SMP COVID-19 Consumer Fraud Alerts

Be on the lookout for COVID-19 scams:

☑️ You will not need to pay anything out-of-pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.

☑️ Medicare will not contact you to confirm your Medicare number or personal information over the phone. COVID-19 Medicare cards are not real and are an attempt to steal your information.

☑️ No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer, like a private insurance company, will call you asking for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or your credit card or bank account information to sign you up to get the vaccine.

Contact the SMP to report Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse at 877.808.2468 or at smpresource.org.

Other SMP Resources

- COVID-19 Fraud Resource Page
  - Consumer Fraud Alert
  - Tips Sheets
  - Infographics
  - Scam Videos
  - Links to Other COVID-19 Resources

- Links
  - ACL COVID Resources: https://acl.gov/COVID-19
  - Other Fraud Schemes: https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes.aspx
  - SMP Resource Center and SMP Locator: https://www.smpresource.org/Default.aspx
Education and Fraud Prevention

We are all important pieces of the puzzle, and we can all help to educate families and their caregivers on how to PREVENT fraud!
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