



Fraud Surrounding COVID-19 is Increasing

As the number of people and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic grows, so do the scams associated with it. Scammers use public health emergencies as opportunities for new fraud schemes, and because older adults are at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19, they may target older populations.

There is currently no FDA-approved vaccine for COVID-19 and although there may be treatments for symptoms, there is no “cure.” However, scammers often use fear-based tactics to convince people that a vaccine or cure is now being offered.

It’s also important to remember that although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health officials may contact you if they believe you may have been exposed to the virus, they will not need to ask you for insurance or financial information.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) recommends that Medicare beneficiaries:

- Contact your own doctor if you are experiencing potential symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do not give out your Medicare number, Social Security number, or personal information in response to unsolicited calls, texts, emails, home visits, or booths at health fairs and other public venues. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes as well.
- Be suspicious of anyone going door-to-door to offer free coronavirus or COVID-19 testing, supplies, or treatments.
- Carefully review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB), looking for errors or claims for products or services that weren’t received.
- Follow the instructions of your state or local government for other actions you should be taking in response to COVID-19.
- Contact your local SMP for help. SMPs empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is ready to provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; DETECT potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and REPORT your concerns. SMPs help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also provides information and educational presentations. To locate your local Senior Medicare Patrol, call 1-877-808-2468 or visit www.smpresource.org.