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Preventing Medicare Fraud

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Overview
What is the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)?

• Grant-based program administered by ACL since 1997
• 54 State Projects: One in every state, DC, PR, GU, and USVI
  – 5,346 SMP team members nationwide
• 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
• National website: [www.SMPResource.org](http://www.SMPResource.org)
The Role of the SMP in Health Care Fraud, Errors, and Abuse

**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.
Health Care Fraud Trends
Method of Contact

Text & Telephone
In-Person
Internet & Email
Social Media
Mail & Print
Fax

Why faxes?
Types of Health Care Fraud

- Medically Unnecessary Services
- Upcoding and Overcharging
- Misrepresentation
- Billing For Services Not Rendered
- Cyber Fraud (including Medical Identity Theft)
- Kickbacks and Conspiracies
- Patient Harm

What is the most common scheme?
Common Schemes

CLINICAL SERVICES
HOME HEALTH
HOSPICE
DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
PRESCRIPTION DRUGS
Special Fraud Categories
Medical Identity Theft

• A medical identity is often more valuable than a stolen credit card
• Telemarketing and robocalls target vulnerable seniors
• Increase in cybercrime, including international criminal enterprises
• Door-to-door solicitations targeting senior communities
• How can you protect yourself and others against medical identity theft?

“guard your card”

https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/Medical-Identity-Theft.aspx
Criminal Enterprises

- Health care is a lucrative crime
- Organized crime vs loosely based criminal enterprises
- International/Transnational
- Increasing use of brokers and robocallers
- Call center schemes associated with telemedicine
- Continued complaints regarding DME, genetic testing, COVID, card scams

SMP SCAM WATCH

REPORT POTENTIAL
TELEHEALTH FRAUD,
ERRORS, OR ABUSE IF:

You receive an unsolicited phone call from someone wanting to verify your pain symptoms

You receive an unsolicited phone call from someone wanting to verify your family history of cancer

https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/Telehealth-Fraud.aspx
Social Engineering Tactics

- Increasing in complexity
- Medicare misrepresentation
- Front loading call with information to convince beneficiary of legitimacy
- Scammers adjust tactics depending on beneficiary
  - Kind, firm, aggressive
- Social Engineering Cycle
  - Investigation, Hook, Play, and Exit
- What’s the latest social engineering tactic?

AI and ChatBots

https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/Medicare-Card-Scams.aspx
Opportunistic Fraud

- PPE
- Testing Scams
- Contact Tracing
- Treatments and Cures
- Robocalls
- Telemedicine
- Add-On Diagnostics
- Door-to-Door
- Insurance Marketing

- Vaccine Trials
- Pre-Vaccine Screening
- Vaccine Surveys
- Vaccine Passports
- Apps
- QR Codes
- Free Tests and Testing
- COVID Test Kits
- Long COVID

Future fraud?
Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)

• The use of technology to digitally collect, store, and/or transmit a patient’s physiologic data

• Originally a home health benefit, but codes added in 2019 to monitor outside the home (increased during pandemic)

• Concerns include:
  • Medically unnecessary services for revenue
  • Inappropriate and misrepresented devices
  • Cyber fraud concerns
  • Grant and research fraud
  • Fitness and biohacking scams
  • Patient harm
SMP Consumer Fraud Alerts

COVID-19
- 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, scammers may target older populations. Click here for the fraud alert.

Genetic Testing
- Across the nation, genetic testing company representatives are offering “free” genetic tests to Medicare beneficiaries. These companies can steal people’s medical identity and falsely bill Medicare, draining the system of needed funds. Click here for the fraud alert.

Hospice
- Hospice fraud is largely unreported and can cause direct patient harm if undetected. The term "hospice fraud" covers a variety of different types of fraud that are each detrimental in their own way. Fraudsters are targeting assisted living facility and nursing home residents whose life expectancy exceeds six months and are using high-pressure and unsolicited marketing tactics to get them to agree to hospice services. Click here for the fraud alert.

SMP Resources
Contact your local Senior Medicare Patrol

www.smpresource.org
QUESTIONS?

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