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Medicare Fraud Prevention Week Begins June 5

By Charles Clarkson, Esq.
Project Director, Senior Medicare Patrol of NJ

The Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey (SMP) is celebrating Medicare Fraud Prevention week. JFS of Middlesex County is the designated agency for New Jersey's Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP). The SMP:

- Partners with aging services and others to promote awareness of fraud, waste, and abuse.
- Develops and disseminates consumer education through presentations, health fairs, and press events.
- Provides consumer counseling and services as consumer advocates to resolve billing disputes and errors.
- Makes appropriate referrals to health care agencies and law enforcement agencies for suspected cases of fraud, waste, and abuse.

This national program educates Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries about preventing, detecting, and reporting health care fraud.

Fraud costs Medicare an estimated \$60 billion per year. It costs Medicare beneficiaries in time, stress, their medical identities, and even their health. Help yourself and others learn how to be protected from scams by joining the Senior Medicare Patrol for Medicare Fraud Prevention Week — June 5 to 11, 2023. The start date is June 5, or "6-5," because most people become eligible for Medicare when they turn 65 years old. The week began last year in conjunction with SMP's 25th anniversary.

Everyone plays a part in the fight against fraud. To promote Medicare Fraud Prevention Week, the SMP Resource Center has created a [webpage](#) for the public.

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(continued)

WHAT IS MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION WEEK?

Medicare Fraud Prevention Week focuses on the actions *everyone* can take to prevent Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse.



SMP

Senior Medicare Patrol

Preventing Medicare Fraud

About the SMP

Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse.



6/5-6/11

Every day during the week, there will be a takeaway for beneficiaries, caregivers, families, professionals, health care providers, and the entire community!

Learn how you can protect yourself and your loved ones from Medicare fraud by joining us on 6/5 through 6/11!

Contact the SMP



www.smpresource.org



info@smpresource.org



1-877-808-2468

Let's Stay Connected!
Follow SMP on social media



MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION WEEK



SMP

Senior Medicare Patrol

Preventing Medicare Fraud

6/5 MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION WEEK STARTS!

BENEFICIARIES 6/6

The best way to stop fraud from happening is to stop it in the first place. Remember the three steps from the SMP: Prevent, Detect, Report!

- **Prevent:** Open and read your Medicare statements.
- **Detect:** Look for things like double charges or services you don't recognize.
- **Report:** Contact the SMP for questions or concerns.

CAREGIVERS 6/7

Learn how to prevent and detect health care fraud, errors, and abuse and teach your client or loved ones how.

Look out for things like boxes of knee braces (durable medical equipment, or DME) lying around the house. This clue may mean your client or loved one has been a victim to a scam.



FAMILIES 6/8

Talk to your loved ones about protecting their Medicare number just as they would a credit card number.

Help your loved ones create a Medicare.gov account to access their Medicare claims online or remind them to review their statements when they come in the mail every three months.

PARTNERS & PROFESSIONALS 6/9

Celebrate Medicare Fraud Prevention Week by sharing SMP information on social media, referring clients and consumers to the SMP, and inviting the SMP to speak during an event.

HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS 6/10

Celebrate by talking to patients about health care-related scams such as those related to durable medical equipment and genetic testing schemes. Needed medical items should never be ordered through TV ads or unsolicited calls.



COMMUNITY 6/11

As a community, we can participate by looking out for our older neighbors and community members.



**Request a free
My Health Care Tracker
from your SMP.**

8 Best Practices for Avoiding Scams

#1

Think before
responding to
an unsolicited
offer.



#2

Learn from
those who
have knowledge
of scams.



#3

Check the data.
If it sounds too
good to be true,
suspect a scam.



#4

Answer your
phone only
when you know
the caller.



#5

Pay attention
to your
Medicare EOB
or MSN.



#6

Talk to your
doctor about
any equipment
needs you have.



#7

Spoiler Alert!
No need to carry
a Medicare card
in your wallet.



#8

Questions??
Call SMPNJ at
877-SMP-4359
for assistance.



SMP of NJ is administered by Jewish Family Services of Middlesex County. This document was supported, in part, by Grant #90MPPG0016, from the Administration for Community Living, Dept. of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with Government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.

Visit the SMP New Jersey website:
<https://seniormedicarepatrolnj.org>
Jewish Family Services of Middlesex County



Senior Medicare Patrol of NJ
219C Blackhorse Lane
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

732-777-1940
Helpline: 732-877-SMP-4359
Website: seniormedicarepatrolnj.org

Prevent Medicare Fraud

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) program empowers and assists Medicare beneficiaries to prevent health care fraud, errors, and abuse. We serve beneficiaries of all ages, their family members, and caregivers. Whether you have questions about how to prevent fraud or you need assistance determining if it has occurred, SMP can help you to protect yourself and your loved ones.



Medicare loses an estimated \$60 billion each year due to fraud, errors, and abuse. Every day, these issues affect people across the country and can lead to identify theft and cost you money.

You can learn to **prevent, detect, and report** Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse by contacting SMP. SMP is a national program with offices in every state, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. When you contact your local SMP, trained team members will answer your questions and share useful tips to help you prevent problems before they happen. You can also contact SMP if you think fraud, errors, or abuse have already occurred. We will provide confidential support to address your concerns. We can also help report and refer issues to the appropriate state and federal agencies for further assistance.

Look out for:

- ◆ Billing for services or medical supplies that were not provided.
- ◆ Misrepresenting a diagnosis, your identity, or other facts to bill Medicare.
- ◆ Prescribing or providing excessive or unnecessary tests and services.
- ◆ Billing out of pocket for services covered by Medicare.



Tips to prevent, detect, and report

- ◆ Only share your Medicare or Social Security number with those you trust.
- ◆ Only carry your Medicare card when you need it.
- ◆ Keep a record of all your medical visits and procedures.
- ◆ Review your Medicare statements for mistakes like charges you don't recognize or duplicate billing.
- ◆ Call your health care provider, Medicare, or your local SMP if you see something suspicious.



Prevent. Detect. Report.



SMP is a national program of the Administration for Community Living, an operating division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Learn more at ACL.gov.



ASK CHARLES

Charles Clarkson is the Project Director of the Senior Medicare Patrol of NJ.

I have a Medicare Advantage plan that I enrolled in last year during open enrollment because I thought that I could take advantage of the extra benefits it offered. However, I just discovered that my primary care physician is not in the plan's network. When can I switch back to Original Medicare?

This is a common question we get at the Senior Medicare Patrol. Most beneficiaries change plans during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, which begins on October 15 and ends on December 7 of each year. During this period beneficiaries can leave Original Medicare and enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan. Beneficiaries can also change Medicare Advantage plans or go back to Original Medicare.

In addition, there is the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period, which runs from January 1 through March 31 of each year. If a beneficiary is in a Medicare Advantage plan on January 1 of each year, they can use the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period to go back to Original Medicare or change Medicare Advantage plans.

Unless a beneficiary has a special enrollment period to make changes (such as moving outside the plan's service area or getting extra help paying for the Medicare costs), they can make changes only during these two periods. If they miss making changes during these two periods, they will have to wait for the next Medicare Open Enrollment Period in the fall, with changes taking effect on January 1 of the following year.

In the meantime, that member will need to find a new primary care doctor who is in the plan's network. A call to the plan can help identify network doctors in the area.

A word of caution, however. If a beneficiary leaves a Medicare Advantage plan,

Mary McGeary
NJ State Director,
State Health Insurance
Assistance Program (SHIP),
NJ Division of Aging Services

Dennis J. McGowan
Manager, Office of AAA
Administration, NJ Division
of Aging Services

Lisa Pino, Morris County
MIPPA/SHIP Coordinator,
Norwescap

Cathy Rowe
Executive Director,
NJ Advocates for Aging Well

Jean Stone
Former Program Integrity
Senior Specialist, Division of
Stakeholder Engagement &
Outreach, CPI Data Sharing &
Partnership Group

Ken Wessel
Trustee, National Institute
for Homecare Accreditation
(NIHCA)

Frank Winter
Partnership Manager,
SMP Liaison, CMS

they usually do not have a guaranteed right to pick up a Medicare supplement plan. Supplement plans can determine whether they wish to accept the beneficiary based on their medical conditions. Our next newsletter will discuss Medicare Supplement guaranteed right situations.



STAY CONNECTED

The Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey has a website. You can reach our site at:
<http://seniormedicarepatrolnj.org/>



Forward this to a friend
#MedicareMaven



Friend us on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter

Serve your community; learn about Medicare by volunteering for the New Jersey Senior Medicare Patrol

SMP of New Jersey is currently recruiting Volunteer Community Liaisons to speak to small groups of their peers and help provide Medicare education at community events throughout the State. Bilingual a plus.

The role of the Community Liaison is to share information that can help others PREVENT, DETECT, and REPORT Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse.

Free Training Available

For more information please contact Michelle Beley-Bianco,
SMP-NJ Coordinator of Volunteers, 732-777-1940 or
michelleb@jfsmiddlesex.org

SMP - Empowering Seniors to Prevent Medicare Fraud

Senior Medicare Patrol of New Jersey

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877-SMP-4359 (877-767-4359)