

New York State SMP MONTHLY

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SMP NEWS

A very important warning from the Social Security Office of the Inspector General. *See back*

VOLUNTEERS

Making a difference in our communities. Hear from SMP Volunteer Helen Sanders. *See back*

TEST YOUR SMP KNOWLEDGE:

1. Not giving out your personal information, is the best way to _____ your identity.
2. Reading your MSN and EOB is the best way to _____ Medicare Fraud, Abuse and Errors.
3. If you believe you have been a victim of Medicare Fraud, Please call the NYS SMP fraud hotline at _____ and speak to one of our outreach counselors.

(Answers on back)

Greetings!

I hope that everyone is well, keeping up with the latest news about the coronavirus and holding to the required social distancing guidelines.

Although we are working from home, we have been emailing the current SMP Alerts about coronavirus scams for you to share with family and friends. Unfortunately, scammers are taking advantage of the coronavirus crisis by using social media, telemarketing, email and door to door visits, to market phony tests, senior care packages, and touting nonexistent vaccines.

The latest scam warning from the Inspector General warns beneficiaries about letters they may receive from Social Security stating that their monthly payments are being suspended or discontinued. Please read about it in this month's featured article and share with your community. Remember, we are only a phone call or email away if you, your family or friends have any questions.

Stay well –

Beth Nelson, NYS SMP Director



Medicare Fraud Helpline 800-333-4374

Inspector General Warns About New Social Security Benefit Suspension Scam

The Social Security Office of the Inspector General has received reports that Social Security beneficiaries have received letters through the U.S. Mail stating their payments will be suspended or discontinued unless they call a phone number referenced in the letter. Scammers may then mislead beneficiaries into providing personal information or payment via retail gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency, or by mailing cash, to maintain regular benefit payments during this period of COVID-19 office closures.

As of Tuesday, March 17, 2020, local Social Security offices are closed to the public due to COVID-19

However, Social Security employees continue to work. Social Security will not suspend or decrease Social Security benefit payments or Supplemental Security Income payments due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.



Any communication you receive that says Social Security will do so is a scam, whether you receive it by letter, text, email, or phone.

Source: [March 27, 2020 by Gail S.](#)

[Ennis, Inspector General for Social Security, \[blog.ssa.gov\]\(#\)](#)

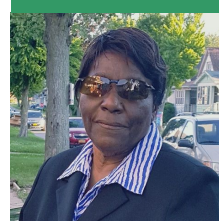
STATE WIDE

New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc.
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[www.nysenior.org](#)

Social Security will never:

- Threaten you with benefit suspension, arrest, or other legal action unless you pay a fine or fee.
- Promise a benefit increase or other assistance in exchange for payment.
- Require payment by retail gift card, cash, wire transfer, internet currency, or prepaid debit card.
- Demand secrecy from you in handling a Social Security-related problem.
- Send official letters or reports containing personally identifiable information via email.

Please call our Fraud Helpline at 800-333-4374 with any questions. There is also a dedicated online form for reporting at the SSA Website [oig.ssa.gov](#). Please share this information with your friends, family, and community to help spread awareness about Social Security scams.



Meet SMP Volunteer Helen Sanders

My name is Helen Sanders, I live in Western, New York (Buffalo). I have been a member of New York Statewide Senior Action Council for over thirty years and a life-time StateWide member. In January 2020, I became an SMP volunteer and find the job very helpful to the disabled and seniors of this area. With all of the scams going on due to COVID-19, I have been very busy making phone calls and reaching out to my community.

-Helen Sanders, SMP volunteer since January 2020

Quiz Answers: 1) Protect 2) Detect
3) 800-333-4374