



LET'S TALK FRAUD

Read about some of the recent headlines and scams due to COVID-19.

See back

VOLUNTEERS

Making a difference in our communities. Hear from SMP Volunteer Ken Luft

See back

TEST YOUR SMP KNOWLEDGE:

1. Keep a record of your medical visits, tests and procedures in a _____.
2. T or F: Only your Doctor can prescribe any type of medical brace for you
3. Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone other than your _____.
4. If you receive a suspicious call, name one thing you must do? _____.

Greetings!

Like most people, here at home, I am looking for signs of spring. The days in WNY have been dark, some snow and cold! But the lilacs are budding, and the daffodils have sprung. And just as I can be sure of warmer days ahead – I can count on scammers out there trying to steal people's identities.

With all the recent Federal Policy changes, due to COVID-19, it is important to continue getting the word out to your contacts about Medicare Fraud. Scams are very sophisticated, and they are targeting seniors via email, text, Facebook and other social media sites. Don't click on links or respond to messages if you do not know the sender. And now with the "As a good faith" provision of telehealth services, providers may use popular video chat applications, giving scammers more opportunities to contact you.

Thank you for all of you do – stay safe, stay well, stay informed and stay connected!

-Beth Nelson, NYS SMP Director

Let's Talk Fraud

A few samples from recent articles:

"Fraudsters call Medicare beneficiaries at home, knock on their doors or approach them in the parking lots of grocery stores and pharmacies, then offer them home-test kits for COVID-19 or packages of hand sanitizer, masks and other protective equipment."

- LA Office Department of Health and Human Services' Inspector General

"A woman's voice said she was working with Medicare, the national health insurance program, to distribute tests for COVID-19, All she needed, the woman said, was Lorina's name, address and Social Security & Medicare information." - Lorina, Riverside, CA.

"A doctor has been charged with mail fraud in connection with the sale of what he described as a **"100%" cure for COVID-19** that he said would render customers immune to the virus for at least six weeks. Emails advertised "COVID-19 treatment packs" priced at \$3,995 for a family of four." - DOJ, CA

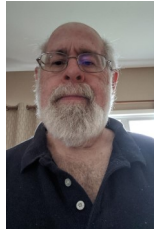
"In Florida, seniors have been contacted by fraudsters claiming that Trump and Vice President Mike Pence have mandated they get tested and that their Medicare number is required." - AP

Source: SMP Website, News

Answers to Quiz on front page:

- 1) Healthcare Journal 2) True
- 3) doctor, healthcare provider
- 4) Hang up!

Meet SMP Volunteer Ken Luft



After I retired, I volunteered to work in a cardiac hospital. I did this as I had been a patient there too often. One of the things I discussed with them as well as my cardiologist was the problem with who pays what.

In the case of my doctors, some had full time people just to handle medical claims. Questions often came up such as What is covered? What is this charge for? Who covers that charge?

Many patients find charges on their Medicare Summary Notice for things they never ordered or received and they don't care because it cost them nothing. Or so they thought.

When the opportunity came up to talk about Medicare fraud I thought at first, it was a company trying to profit from the confusion. Then I researched the SMP and volunteered. After interviewing I went to their convention and did the required training. If you choose to volunteer, I suggest you talk to other volunteers, to get an idea of what you would be doing.

Some things I like to impart in my presentation to others:

- They have control
- There is help
- I promise to stay and answer all questions
- It could cost them if they don't review their statement
- I will leave them with a solution or find ways to get it resolved.



On the whole, I feel that if we can control fraud, the money can go back into medical care. I know there are people who can't afford to have the medical care or drugs they need. In my small way I hope that I can help limit those problems.

-Ken Luft
volunteer since Oct 2018

STATE  **WIDE**

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