

# SMP MONTHLY

ISSUE NO. 28 | APR 2022 |



## REMINDERS



Join us for the  
SMP Volunteer  
Meeting on Apr 22, 2022  
at 11:00 AM.

- To join by computer  
Click [HERE](#)
- To join by phone dial  
646-558-8656, Meeting  
ID: 533 682 2516

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**April 11, 1PM: NYC Chapter Meeting - Everyone invited to attend.** Topic: Federal Legislative Update with Gil Ruiz, Deputy Legislative Director, Office of US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand  
[See Flyer](#)

**Save the Date - September 12 - 14, 2022** for our 50th Anniversary Celebration in Saratoga Springs!



Hello,

In our last newsletter, we wrote about a drop in COVID cases and mask mandates throughout the state. But things change quickly and we are now watching the BA.2 (most prominent in the U.S.) and the emerging XE variant. Here are a few updates to be aware of:

- **Americans 50 and older can get a second COVID-19 booster** if it's been at least four months since their last vaccination.
- **Beneficiaries with Original Medicare can now get up to eight tests per calendar month at no cost** from participating pharmacies and health care providers for the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. (more on back)
- **Watch out for the surge in telemedicine fraud during the pandemic.** *NBC Nightly News* ran a story on Friday, April 1st. [\(link to video\)](#) **Look for the SMP shout out in the video! (3:26)**

In our newsletter and SMP volunteer meeting this month, we will review and discuss Medical Identity Theft and interesting ways that scammers try to steal your personal information. We've included a few examples but also want to hear from you. Collect some of your personal stories to share during our April 22nd meeting.

Have a great week everyone!

- NY StateWide Senior Action Council Staff

**Medicare Fraud Helpline 800-333-4374**

## Medical Identity Theft



Medical identity (ID) theft occurs when someone steals personal information – such as your name & Medicare number and uses the information to bill your insurance for supplies or services you did not receive.

Cases of medical ID theft reported to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) rose from about **6,800 in 2017 to nearly 43,000 in 2021.**

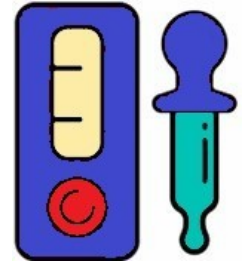
Examples include:

- Giving out your Medicare number:
  - ⇒ Over the phone or internet to someone offering genetic testing, coronavirus testing or supplies, back or knee braces
  - ⇒ At a fair or other gathering as a check-in or to receive “free” services
  - ⇒ To someone claiming Medicare will cover housekeeping services
- You were contacted by your doctor to cancel appointments since, unbeknownst to you, you were signed up for hospice care.
- You were contacted by a debt collection company for a provider bill you do not owe.
- Your Medicare and/or Medicare Advantage plan denies or limits your benefits because of a medical condition you do not have.

**Medical profiles are a hot criminal commodity,** fetching as much as \$1,000 on the dark web compared to \$1 for a Social Security number and \$5 to \$30 for a credit card.

Source: credit reporting agency Experian.

## Original Medicare Covers Eight Over-the-Counter COVID-19 Tests per Calendar Month



**Who is eligible?** Medicare will cover these tests if you have Part B, including those enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan.

**When does this initiative start?** It starts April 4, 2022, and continues until the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) ends.

**How can I get tests through this initiative?** You can get over-the-counter COVID-19 tests at any [pharmacy or health care provider that participates in this initiative.](#)

**Will I have to pay anything to get over-the-counter COVID-19 tests in this initiative?**

No, you won't have to pay as long as you go to an eligible pharmacy or health care provider that participates in this initiative.

**Can I get reimbursed for any tests I bought before April 4, 2022?** No. Medicare coverage and payment begins on April 4, 2022.

**Can I submit a claim for a test I pay for myself?** No. Medicare cannot process a claim submitted

### FYI - BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU CLICK!

Offers of **Medicare Flex cars and spend cards**, as well as **dental coverage** are going around the internet with the intent to mislead the user into enrolling in a Medicare Advantage Plan.



Sources: [smpresource.org](http://smpresource.org); [medicare.gov](http://medicare.gov); [aarp.com](http://aarp.com)

**STATE WIDE**  
  
**New York StateWide Senior Action Council, Inc**  
 275 State Street, Albany, NY 12210 • 800-333-4374 • Fax 518-436-7642  
[www.nysenior.org](http://www.nysenior.org)

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