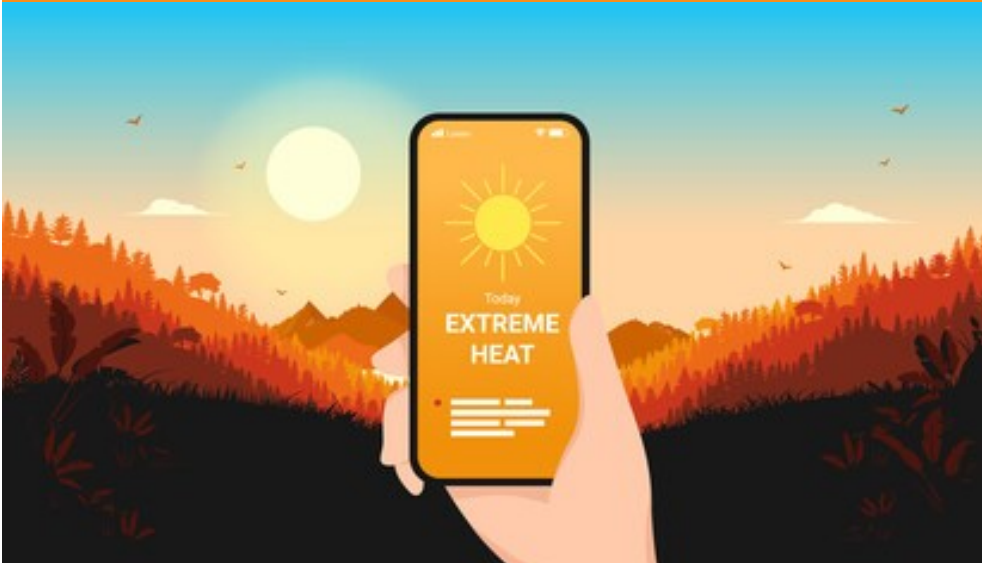


# SMP MONTHLY

ISSUE NO. 32 | AUG 2022 |



## REMINDERS



Join us for the  
**SMP Volunteer  
Meeting on Oct. 21, 2022  
at 11:00 AM.**

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

Hello,

It's really hot out there and we hope you are finding ways to stay safe and cool! Here are some resources from the NYS DOH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that you can share with your community:

- [Find a cooling center near you: Cooling Center FAQs and Cooling Center Finder \(just enter in your address\)](#)
- [Keep your cool during summer heat: Symptoms of heat related illness and what you can do during a heat wave](#)
- [CDC: Helpful tips, information and resources to help you stay safe in extreme heat](#)



In this month's issue, we will discuss the 2022 National Healthcare Fraud Enforcement Action. Last week, HHS-OIG and our law enforcement partners announced criminal charges against **defendants in 13 U.S. federal districts, for allegedly defrauding federal health care programs of roughly \$1.2 billion! (Find out more on page 2)**

We will also meet new StateWide outreach counselor Candy Rivera-Whitehead. Have a great week!



Please consider joining us for **StateWide's 50th Anniversary and 2022**

**Convention, Sept. 12-14 in Saratoga Springs.** We will be holding a special session for volunteers and will meet our National Directors - Rebecca Kinney and Chiquita O'Cain. If you are interested in coming to convention, please reach out to Joan Akpan at [Joan@nysenior.org](mailto:Joan@nysenior.org) or call **800-333-4374.**

We are taking the summer off from our ZOOM meetings to re-charge our batteries, but feel free to call or email us anytime you have a question, concern or to share a fraud tip.

# Medicare Fraud Helpline 800-333-4374

## 2022 Health Care Fraud Enforcement Action (July 2022)

The U.S. Justice Department unveiled a \$1.2 billion healthcare fraud crackdown for alleged fraudulent billing schemes tied to telemedicine, genetic and cardiovascular testing, and durable medical equipment (DME).

Telemedicine — often called telehealth — lets your health care provider provide care for you without an in-person office visit. Telehealth is done primarily online with internet access on your computer, tablet, or a smartphone.

Defendants charged in this action:

- allegedly controlled a telemarketing network, based both domestically and overseas.
- lured thousands of elderly and/or disabled patients to agree to DME, prescription medications and genetic testing ordered without patient interaction or with only a brief telephone conversation.

For more information on the 2022 Enforcement Action, including a press release, video summary and article on Telehealth, visit the OIG Webpage or click on the link [HERE](#).

### DID YOU KNOW: Billing for cardiovascular



**genetic tests has spiked in the past year.** Some of these tests get **billed** for as high as **\$10,000** each, with claims sometimes **paying out** as much as **\$8,000**.



## Meet Outreach Counselor Candy Rivera-Whitehead

Candy is a long time resident of the Capital Region and recently joined the StateWide Senior

Action Council team in June. She is a dedicated and compassionate Outreach Counselor who has worked with the senior population for 35 years.

Candy began her Outreach career in 1987 with the inception of the NYS EPIC Program where she continued to work for 27 years, educating seniors throughout New York State on the cost saving benefits of EPIC.

After leaving NYS EPIC, Candy worked with a Medicare health plan for 8 yrs. where she became proficient in educating, assisting and guiding “New to Medicare” members through the basics of Medicare and selecting a plan that met their needs.

### WHAT IS UPCODING? When a provider



assigns an **inaccurate billing code** to a medical procedure or treatment **to increase reimbursement.**

When checking your Medicare statements, make sure the **services billed** are the **services you received.**

The NYS Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud issues. Please call the NYS SMP at 800-333-4374.

Source: [smpresource.org](http://smpresource.org), [oig.hhs.gov](http://oig.hhs.gov)

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