

# SMP MONTHLY

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## REMINDERS



Join us for the SMP Volunteer Meeting on Nov. 18, 11 AM

Topic: Romance Scams

Speaker: Outreach Organizer  
Melissa Kinney

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

Hello,

November is a busy month. We are in the midst of Medicare Open Enrollment, early voting is happening now through November 6th and Election Day is November 8th.

During Open Enrollment, we want to remind everyone to be on the lookout for unsolicited phone callers, door to door visitors and social media scams that try to switch you to plans that may not be the best for your needs. Offers of Medicare Flex Cards and dental coverage are swirling around the internet with the intent to mislead users to enroll into a Medicare Advantage plan. Give our counselors a call if you have concerns.

If you plan to take advantage of shorter lines and early voting, you can find your polling site by clicking [HERE](#) or visit <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/>.

This month's SMP volunteer newsletter and meeting will focus on Romance Scams including interesting stats on online dating for older adults and tips on how to protect your device and personal information. We hope to see you at the meeting on November 18, 11 AM and want to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.



Consumers reported a record **\$547 Million** in losses to Romance Scams in 2021

Source: [FTC.gov](#)

As you compare

**Medicare plans for 2023:**

- Be sure to check that your prescriptions are on the plan's list of covered drugs.
- You can also estimate your out-of-pocket costs for brand name and generic drugs.
- [Compare up to 3 plans at one time](#)
- If you take insulin, you should get help comparing plans and costs for 2023.
- **Call our certified counselors** for free, unbiased information about your Medicare options including prescription drug plans.

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

## Romance Scams and Older Adults

We will learn more about Romance Scams in our meeting on November 11th. Until then, let's look at some interesting statistics.

- Reported losses to romance scams have increased significantly in recent years, and this **trend accelerated** with the start of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- For older adults, reported **romance scam losses increased from \$139 million in 2020 to \$213 million in 2021**.
- In 2021, adults 60 and over reported losing **\$43 million** to romance scams **using bank transfers and payments as the payment method**.
- The largest share of reported **cryptocurrency losses** by older adults were on investment scams, with **romance scams a close second**.
- In 2021, the reported median individual **dollar loss by adults 60 and over** for reports categorized as romance scams was **\$5,100** (compared to \$685 for all fraud reports by this age group.)



Scammers who contacted older adult victims via **social media** **more than doubled in 2021**.

- *Federal Trade Commission*

Source: *FTC 2021-2022 Protecting Older Consumers Report*, [ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov)

## Protecting Your Device and Personal Information

### Keep your system updated

It's important to install updates to prevent viruses from damaging files in your device.

### Subscribe to an antivirus program

A good antivirus program will block and protect your device from bugs, viruses, malware and hackers.

### Work with trusted technicians

To troubleshoot computer problems, don't be afraid to ask for help. But check online reviews and ask family and friends for recommendations.

### Did you Know

When making an online purchase, don't give out your credit card unless the website is secure and reputable.

A tiny icon of a padlock in the web address bar symbolizes a higher level of security.



## NEW GENETIC TESTING SCAM

### PRIMARY IMMUNODEFICIENCY



The SMP has heard reports of **another twist on the genetic testing scam**.

This is a reminder that any **call about genetic testing of any kind** – cardiac, cancer, immunodeficiency – are all **attempts to steal your medical identity**.

**IF YOU GET A CALL LIKE THIS HANG UP!**

**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.**

