

Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol Fraud Alert



Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.

Please feel free to share this publication with others who may benefit from its contents.

TO CONTACT WI SMP

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Preventing Medicare Fraud

Surge of Unrequested and Unwanted COVID-19 Test Kits

On May 11, 2023, the COVID-19 public health emergency ended, and with that, Medicare stopped paying for over-the-counter tests (though it continues to cover those provided in a clinic, doctor's office, or other health care setting and processed by a laboratory).

The end of the public health emergency, unwittingly, initiated a surge of Medicare beneficiaries receiving test kits in their homes.

A recent NPR article pointed out that fraudsters are using testing sites, telemarketing calls, text messages, social media platforms, and door-to-door visits to perpetrate COVID-19-related scams. Fraudsters are offering COVID-19 services in exchange for personal details, including Medicare information. However, these services are unapproved and illegitimate.

These scammers take advantage of COVID-19-related needs and services to benefit themselves, putting beneficiaries at risk of potential harm. The personal information collected can be used to fraudulently bill federal health care programs and commit medical identity theft. For more on the NPR article, click here: [A COVID Test Medicare Scam May Be a Trial Run for Further Fraud : Shots - Health News : NPR](#)

According to Ingrid Kunding, Senior Medicare Patrol Project Manager, the toll-free Helpline in Wisconsin has had a significant increase in the number of calls related to unwanted tests kits. Medicare beneficiaries are receiving test kits that they did not order and do not want. These are then billed to the beneficiary's account with Medicare often paying \$94.08 per test.

Over please

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Fraud Alert

Noted Concerns

How did the scammer get my Medicare number? A scammer may have obtained your number through a previous unscrupulous situation that you were unaware of, or it may have bought on the “dark web”. You may never know how the number was obtained, but it can be used fraudulently again.

How will I know if this happens again? You will need to review your Medicare Summary Notices (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) to know if your number has been used again by the fraudster. You can check your MSN or EOB online or when they are mailed (the MSNs are mailed quarterly).

What do I look for on MSN or EOB? When reviewing your statements, look for any tests or services that were not ordered by your health care provider, or that you did not receive. For a tutorial on how to read your MSN, go to [Read Your Medicare Statements \(smpresource.org\)](http://smpresource.org)

Do I need to get a new Medicare card? You may need to contact Medicare to get a new number if your number has been used to falsely file claims to your Medicare account. You can call SMP at 888-818-2611 to discuss the process of requesting a new Medicare number.

What You Can Do

- Refuse the tests, if possible, return to sender.
- If it has already been delivered, call the supplier, and ask for a return label. (Do not return if there is a cost to you.)
- Be cautious of offers for “free” medical services.
- Contact Senior Medicare Patrol to talk about the steps you can take.

Learn More on How to Protect Yourself

- The Senior Medicare Patrol website: www.smpwi.org
- Contact your local Aging and Disability Resource Center, ADRC. To find the office in your area, visit: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc>

Wisconsin SMP is available for outreach events, educational sessions for beneficiaries, caregivers and professionals, workshops and exhibits at events.

Please contact us at www.smpwi.org for more information.



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