



ND SMP Scam of the Month – July 2016

What You Can Do to Fight Fraud

Medicare loses over \$60 billion every year. Medicare is a very large system, receiving approximately 4.5 million claims a day and making over \$1 billion in payments daily. This presents a huge challenge to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) mission which is to detect and prevent waste, abuse and fraud.

Medicare has unleashed strike force teams to battle fraud. But law enforcement and CMS program officials say **Medicare beneficiaries are the first and best defense** against criminals who con the Medicare system. To fight Medicare fraud:

- Review every Medicare summary notice and explanation of benefits mailed to you. The documents detail services, supplies and what you owe for these services, so look for services you didn't receive.
- Call Medicare's hotline at 800-447-8477 to report healthcare fraud. No calls are ignored and callers are not required to use their names.
- Identity thefts often target older people to "harvest" Medicare ID numbers and other personal information. To keep your personal information out of the clutches of Medicare fraudsters, remove your Social Security card from your wallet and store in a secure place along with your Medicare card. Only carry your Medicare card when you will be accessing a health care system such as a pharmacy, new doctor visit, etc.
- Protect your Medicare prescriptions. Scamming of prescriptions is becoming more common; the criminal sells the drugs, fetching top dollars from dealers. Safeguard your prescriptions, hide or lock up your medications, especially if you have people coming into your home to provide services such as cleaning, construction work, etc.
- Never share personal information unless you initiate the contact with a trusted health care provider or pharmacist.

Here's what to do if you get a suspicious call:

- Don't give out any personal information.
- Simply hang up the phone—or better yet, if you don't recognize the telephone number, don't answer it at all.
- Call the ND SMP office if you have questions about Medicare fraud.

The information provided is intended to be a general summary only. Source of information: AARP Bulletin, June 2016 Vol. 57 No. 5. Investigate Report: Medicare Fraud

North Dakota Senior Medicare Patrol Phone: 800-233-1737 or (701) 858-3580
For more information or to locate your SMP, visit **www.ndcpd.org/smp**

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