

Senior Medicare Patrol



Welcome to Medicare!

Medicare is the federal health insurance program created for people ages 65 and older and for some people with disabilities under 65. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS, in 2018, 60 million Americans were enrolled in Medicare with 10,000 new enrollees added every day. Over 5 million claims are processed daily. Given the significant number of Medicare beneficiaries and volume of processed claims, there is considerable potential for mistakes, for things to go wrong or to be missed, and for scammers to take advantage.

Protect Yourself from Medicare Fraud

Did you know that Medicare loses billions, yes **BILLIONS**, of dollars each year due to fraud, abuse, and errors? Think it doesn't happen in Wisconsin? Think it can't happen to you? Unfortunately, think again: it could, and it does. The Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol, SMP, is here to help!

The Wisconsin SMP is a grant-funded program, housed at the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, GWAAR, that provides education to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to **protect, detect, and report** Medicare fraud, abuse, and errors. We do this in several ways, including outreach and educational presentations, staffing booths at conferences and events, and talking one-on-one to people who have questions or concerns via our toll-free, confidential Helpline at **1-888-818-2611**.

Here are some quick tips for you to consider:

PROTECT

- **Do** treat your Medicare card and number like your credit card.
- **Do** watch out for identify theft.
- **Do** be aware that Medicare will not call you or visit to sell you anything. If someone calls you, stating they are from Medicare, hang up the phone.
- **Do** be cautious of offers for "free" medical services. If it sounds too good to be true, it likely is!
- **Don't** give out your Medicare number to anyone except your trusted health care provider or other Medicare provider. If someone calls, asking you to verify your Medicare number or offering to activate your new Medicare card, hang up. That is most likely a scam.

DETECT

- Review your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) and other statements, watching closely for services that you didn't receive, double billing issues, or services that were not ordered by your doctor.
- Consider setting up an account to access your Medicare information online at www.MyMedicare.gov to view recent MSNs in real time, track claims made on your behalf and check payment status of claims.
- Create a Personal Health Care Journal to record doctor visits, tests, and procedures. This will provide you with a record that you can compare with your MSNs and other statements to make sure they are accurate.

REPORT

- Gather all your information and documentation.
- Call your provider if you have questions about a claim and ask for clarification.
- Call the Wisconsin SMP, toll-free at **1-888-818-2611** to further discuss your concerns. If your concern is suspected fraud, with your permission, we will gather information and documents from you and submit to the Office of Inspector General for further investigation.

Take charge to become a better health care consumer. Help prevent Medicare fraud, abuse, and errors.