California Health Advocates

Our Focus

Providing quality Medicare and related healthcare coverage information, education and policy advocacy

- **Advocacy** – Bring the experiences of Medicare beneficiaries to the public, and especially legislators and their staff at federal and state levels, through media and educational campaigns.

- **Policy** – Conduct public policy research to support recommendations for improving rights and protections for Medicare beneficiaries and their families

- **Education** – Provide timely and high-quality information on Medicare through our website, fact sheets, policy briefs and educational workshops
Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

- SMP is a federally funded project
- Established in 1997
- 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
- 54 SMPs across the country
SMP Message:

- **Protect** Medical Identity by guarding the Medicare card
- **Detect** Fraudulent Billing by reviewing Medicare Summary Notices and Explanation of Benefits
- **Report** Medicare Fraud by calling SMP at 1-855-613-7080
Current trends:

1. New Medicare card related phone scams

2. Questionable Hospice Enrollments

3. Durable Medical Equipment (DME)/Back Brace Scams
Beware of:

- Unsolicited calls
  - Offering to send the new Medicare card and asks for the Medicare number
  - Saying beneficiary needs to get a temporary card, which costs between $5-$50 and you need to give them some personal information
  - Offering free genetic testing to screen for cancer followed by getting your new Medicare card
  - Offering to send the new Medicare card along with a complimentary brace Medicare is giving away to alleviate pain

Reports received by HICAPS, beneficiaries, family members and caregivers throughout CA.

If you have a Medicare beneficiary who needs assistance, SMP will need:

- Beneficiary’s name, address, date of birth, Medicare number and a good contact number
- Copy of Medicare Summary Notices if applicable - VERY IMPORTANT
Your New Medicare Card

Will Be Mailed Between April 2018 & April 2019

- Your new Medicare card will not include a Social Security number.
- New number, new card, same benefits.
- No cost to you.
- Update your current address with Social Security at: ss.gov/myaccount or call 1-830-772-1213.
- Your new card will be mailed to you. Medicare will not call you about your new card or number.
- After you receive your new card, shred your old card.

FRAUD ALERT! 
- New Card = New Scams
- Scammers may try to convince you they are from Medicare. Medicare will not call you or visit you in person. All Medicare communication will be through the mail!

Picture of the front and back of our new bookmarks.

We currently have them available in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, Korean, Hmong, Armenian, Vietnamese, Russian and Punjabi.

To place an order, contact Jasmine at jsuo@cahealthadvocates.org
PROTECT-Guard Your Card

Treat your Medicare card like a credit card number.

- Don’t carry your Medicare card unless you need it.
- Only take it to doctor’s appointments, visits to your hospital or clinic, or trips to the pharmacy.
- Never give your Medicare number to a stranger.
As you can see from the attached photos, the SHIP logo and California HICAP 800# is on one side and the SMP logo and 855# is on the other side.

The card holder fits the new Medicare card at 4.25" by 2.75" - and is translucent plastic.

Please send your order to Jasmine at jsuo@cahealthadvocates.org - limit 500 at this time.
Hospice Enrollment:

**Beware of:**

- Presentations at low-income senior housing facilities where beneficiaries are offered assistance with cooking and cleaning while unknowingly placed into hospice.
  - Reported by service coordinators of low-income housing units and other room & board facilities and by family members.
- Free milk for an entire year covered by Medicare.
  - Reported by SMP liaison with the Kern County HICAP.
- Free hospice trial period.
  - Reported by Orange County Ombudsman.
- Unsolicited calls/home visits offering additional benefits for low-income Medicare beneficiaries.
  - Reported by Kings/Tulare HICAP and Medicare beneficiaries.
- Beneficiaries approached at church food bank, agree to free services while unknowingly placed into hospice.
  - Reported by beneficiary’s family friend in San Diego.

**If you have a Medicare beneficiary who needs assistance, SMP will need:**

- Beneficiary’s name, address, date of birth, Medicare number and a good contact number.
- Copy of Medicare Summary Notices- **VERY IMPORTANT**
DME/Back Brace

- **Beware of:**
  - Unsolicited home visits or phone calls offering Medicare approved DME
  - TV commercials and newspaper ads offering “free” Medicare approved braces to alleviate pain
  - Urgently marked postcards notifying beneficiaries of pending eligibility for free Medicare-covered back and/or knee braces
  - DME billed to Medicare that was not provided
    - Reports received by multiple HICAPs, beneficiaries, family members and caregivers throughout CA.

- **If you have a Medicare beneficiary who needs assistance, SMP will need:**
  - Beneficiary’s name, address, date of birth, Medicare number and a good contact number
  - Copy of Medicare Summary Notices if applicable - **VERY IMPORTANT**
SMP Fraud Alerts are available in different languages including:


You may access these fraud alerts by visiting our California Health Advocates website at:

https://cahealthadvocates.org/fraud-abuse/medicare-fraud-alerts/
**DETECT-Review MSNs & EOBs**

- Keep track of medical appointments
  - Use journal or calendar
- Look for three things on your statements:
  - Charges for something you didn’t get
  - Billing for the same services or supplies twice
  - Services that weren’t ordered by your doctor

- Medicare Summary Notice (MSN)
  - Statement that shows what providers and suppliers billed Medicare in a 3-month period
  - Accessible 24/7 via mymedicare.gov
- Explanation of Benefits (EOB)
REPORT - Suspicious Charges

- Call the SMP Hot Line - (855) 613-7080

- We may need
  - Description of the situation
  - Name of provider involved
  - Name(s) of Beneficiary involved
  - Supporting Documentation
    - Medicare Summary Notices, invoice, etc.
SMP placemats available in English and Spanish.

To place an order, contact Jasmine at jsuo@cahealthadvocates.org
FIGHT FRAUD IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Tips you can share:

- “Protect your Medicare #”
- “Review your MSN, EOBs for accuracy”
- “Report your concerns”

Outreach and Education:

- Share and post our CA-SMP fraud alerts
- Call SMP to schedule a no-charge presentation to your group
- Refer cases to your HICAP SMP Liaison