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## Maine Senior Medicare Patrol

### About Us

The Maine Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a statewide program to educate Maine Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers about Medicare benefits and how to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse. The Maine SMP works with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Aging and Disability Services, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's), and Legal Services for Maine Elders (LSE) and provides outreach, education, and counseling statewide. Volunteers at each AAA provide presentations, work one-on-one with Medicare beneficiaries and provide program support. For more information about the Maine SMP, [click here for our fact sheet](#).

If you have questions about your Medicare statement, need assistance with billing issues, suspect healthcare fraud, errors or abuse, would like to schedule a presentation for your community group or organization, or have an interest in volunteering, contact the Maine SMP at your local AAA at [1-877-353-3771](tel:1-877-353-3771).

The Maine SMP is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living and is one of 54 programs nationwide. For more information about the national SMP Program, please visit <https://www.smpresource.org/Content/What-SMPs-Do.aspx>.

### Contact the Maine SMP

Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for any of the following services:

- Become a volunteer to share Medicare and health care fraud information in your community
- Schedule a Medicare, Fraud or Scams presentation for your group or organization
- Answers to your questions about Medicare and/or health care fraud and scams
- Report suspected Medicare and/or MaineCare fraud
- Help understanding your Medicare Summary Notice, Explanation of Benefits or correspondence from your Medicare plan(s)

**Aroostook Agency on Aging:** Serving Aroostook County.  
[1-800-439-1789](tel:1-800-439-1789) or [www.aroostookaging.org](http://www.aroostookaging.org)

**Eastern Area Agency on Aging:** Serving Penobscot, Piscataquis, Washington and Hancock Counties.  
[1-800-432-7812](tel:1-800-432-7812) or [www.eaaa.org](http://www.eaaa.org)

**SeniorsPlus:** Serving Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin Counties.  
[1-800-427-1241](tel:1-800-427-1241) or [www.seniorsplus.org](http://www.seniorsplus.org)

**Spectrum Generations:** Serving Kennebec, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc and Somerset Counties.  
[1-800-639-1553](tel:1-800-639-1553) or [www.spectrumgenerations.org](http://www.spectrumgenerations.org)

**Southern Maine Agency on Aging:** Serving Cumberland and York Counties.  
[1-800-427-7411](tel:1-800-427-7411) or [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org)

## Medicare

To learn more about the Medicare program, check out [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). This U.S. government site provides information on benefits, costs, enrollment and available plans in your area.

To sign-up for an on-line look at your Medicare account, checkout [www.mymedicare.gov](http://www.mymedicare.gov). You'll have access to claims and payments, as well as information on the preventive benefits that are available to you free of charge.

To enroll in Medicare, go to <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib>.

## Protecting Yourself from Fraud and Scams

Being savvy isn't always easy! Learn more about how to avoid becoming a victim of fraud and scams.

Learn how to protect yourself and your Medicare benefits by checking out the websites from the Maine SMP's [Be "Scam Smart": Report, Detect, Protect](#) flyer.

The Federal government's Stop Medicare Fraud website provides tips on avoiding scams: <https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud>

The SMP National Resource Center provides tips for protecting yourself against fraud and scams: <https://www.smpresource.org/>

The Federal Trade Commission provides information on how you can protect yourself and where to report scams if you become a victim: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>

The AARP Fraud Watch Network provides access to information about how to protect yourself and your family from scams. Check them out at [https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/?cmp=BRD-LNK-REALPOSS-LP1\\_SF](https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/?cmp=BRD-LNK-REALPOSS-LP1_SF)

Learn how to protect yourself against COVID-19 scams: [COVID Health Scams](#)

Learn how to prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse: [Prevent Medicare Fraud](#)

## Reporting Suspected Fraud

To report Medicare fraud directly to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General, go to

<https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud>

To report a variety of scams, go to the Federal Trade Commission's Complaint Assistant website at <https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/#crnt&panel1-1>

AARP's Fraud Watch Network provides opportunities to report a variety of fraud issues. Go to <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/helpline/?intcmp=AE-SCM-FRD-HLPLN>

To report fraud in Maine's Medicaid program (MaineCare), go to

[https://www.maine.gov/ag/crime/crimes\\_we\\_prosecute/healthcare\\_crimes.shtml](https://www.maine.gov/ag/crime/crimes_we_prosecute/healthcare_crimes.shtml)

## Resources

**AARP:** Providing information on protecting Medicare and Social Security.

1-888-687-2277 or <https://www.aarp.org/>

**Maine Office of Adult Protective Services:** Providing information or help on elder abuse, neglect or exploitation.

1-800-624-8404 or [www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/aps-guardianship/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/aps-guardianship/index.html)

**Alpha One:** Providing programs and services to people with disabilities statewide.

1-800-640-7200 or [www.alphaonenow.org](http://www.alphaonenow.org)

**Aroostook Agency on Aging:** Providing information on a variety of aging and disability issues, including Medicare and health care fraud. Serving Aroostook County.

1-800-439-1789 or [www.aroostookaging.org](http://www.aroostookaging.org)

**Eastern Area Agency on Aging:** Providing information on a variety of aging and disability issues, including Medicare and health care fraud. Serving Penobscot, Piscataquis, Washington and Hancock Counties.

1-800-432-7812 or [www.eaaa.org](http://www.eaaa.org)

**Federal Trade Commission:** Providing information on a variety of consumer protection issues.

1-877-382-4357 or [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov)

**Legal Services for Maine Elders:** Providing free legal services to Mainers 60 and older.

1-800-750-5353 or [www.mainelse.org](http://www.mainelse.org)

**Maine Attorney General:** Reporting suspected MaineCare (Medicaid) fraud online at

[https://www.maine.gov/ag/crime/crimes\\_we\\_prosecute/healthcare\\_crimes.shtml](https://www.maine.gov/ag/crime/crimes_we_prosecute/healthcare_crimes.shtml)

**Maine Bureau of Insurance:** Providing information and assistance on a variety of insurance products and issues in Maine.

1-800-300-5000 or [www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance](http://www.maine.gov/pfr/insurance)

**Maine DHHS-Office of Aging and Disability Services:** Providing information and

assistance on aging and disabilities issues in Maine.  
[1-800-262-2232](tel:1-800-262-2232) or [www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/index.html](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oads/index.html)

**Medicare Rights Center:** Providing information on choosing doctors and other providers in collaboration with the SHIP and SMP programs. [November 2023 Medicare Minute](#)

**SeniorsPlus:** The Area Agency on Aging in Western Maine. Providing information on a variety of aging and disability issues, including Medicare and health care fraud. Serving Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin Counties.  
[1-800-427-1241](tel:1-800-427-1241) or [www.seniorsplus.org](http://www.seniorsplus.org)

**Spectrum Generations:** The Area Agency on Aging in Central Maine. Providing information on a variety of aging and disability issues, including Medicare and health care fraud. Serving Kennebec, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc and Somerset Counties.  
[1-800-639-1553](tel:1-800-639-1553) or [www.spectrumgenerations.org](http://www.spectrumgenerations.org)

**Social Security Administration:** Providing assistance with Social Security benefits and Medicare enrollment.  
[1-877-543-5332](tel:1-877-543-5332) or [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**Southern Maine Agency on Aging:** The Area Agency on Aging in Southern Maine. Providing information on a variety of aging and disability issues, including Medicare and health care fraud. Serving Cumberland and York Counties.  
[1-800-427-7411](tel:1-800-427-7411) or [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org)

**Stop Medicare Fraud:** Information from the U.S. Department of Justice on how to prevent Medicare fraud, including information on the latest scams.  
<https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud>.

**U.S. Government Site on Medicare:** Providing information on a variety of Medicare issues, including the Plan Finder for prescription drug plans and health plans.  
[1-800-Medicare](tel:1-800-Medicare) or [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). To obtain access to *your* Medicare information, go to [www.mymedicare.gov](http://www.mymedicare.gov) to set-up an account.

**Western Maine Community Action:** Providing information and assistance on the Health Insurance Marketplace in Maine.  
[1-800-645-9636](tel:1-800-645-9636) or <https://www.enroll207.com>

For information on the Health Insurance Marketplace in Maine via phone, contact Consumers for Affordable Health Care at [1-800-965-7476](tel:1-800-965-7476).

### Grievances, Complaints, and Beneficiary Resources

#### Scams

A variety of scams and medical identity theft occur every day in this country. To learn more about these scams and how you can protect yourself and Medicare, check out the following websites:

The U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging, formerly chaired by Maine Senator Susan Collins, has issued a fraud report, identifying the top 10 scams targeting older individuals. The report can be found at [www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/agong\\_committee\\_fraud\\_book\\_20221.pdf](http://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/agong_committee_fraud_book_20221.pdf)

The Federal government's Stop Medicare Fraud website provides information on common scams and identity theft, including on-line reporting:

<https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud>

The SMP National Resource Center provides the latest information on scams throughout the United States, as well as tips for protecting yourself against fraud and scams:

<https://www.smpresource.org/>

The Federal Trade Commission provides information on a variety of scams, how you can protect yourself and where to report scams if you become a victim:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>

Genetic Testing Scam: If you are approached by someone who offers "free" genetic testing or cancer screening, turn it down. This is not a free test and needs to be ordered by your primary physician if medically necessary. For more information, please read the attached fact sheet.

The AARP Fraud Watch Network provides access to information about how to protect yourself and your family from scams. Check them out at

[https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/?cmp=BRD-LNK-REALPOSS-LP1\\_SF](https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/?cmp=BRD-LNK-REALPOSS-LP1_SF)

Inspector General Warning: Offers to Increase Your Social Security Benefit Are from Criminals

## Volunteering

Volunteer opportunities are available with the Maine State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) and the Maine Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP). Working together, these programs provide a variety of volunteer opportunities to help educate and assist Mainers with a variety of Medicare issues and help beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent health care errors, fraud and abuse. Here are some of the opportunities that may be available in your area:

**Assisting with administration:** Help with work such as copying, filing, data entry and placing phone calls in support of SMP activity.

**Distributing information:** Help with transporting and disseminating SMP information materials to sites and events; may include presenting prepared copy or performing scripted activities for small groups.

**Staffing exhibits:** Help by staffing information booths or exhibits at events such as health fairs; also may provide general information about SMP to the public and answer simple questions.

**Making group presentations:** Help by giving presentations on SMP topics to small and large groups; may interact with the audience by answering questions and through discussion.

**Counseling:** Help by having direct conversations with Medicare beneficiaries about their individual situations; may include review of personal information such as Medicare Summary Notices, billing statements, and other related financial and health documents.

Interested in checking out SHIP/SMP volunteer opportunities in your area? Contact your local Area Agency on Aging to learn more:

**Aroostook Agency on Aging:** Serving Aroostook County.

1-800-439-1789 or [www.aroostookaging.org](http://www.aroostookaging.org)

**Eastern Area Agency on Aging:** Serving Penobscot, Piscataquis, Washington and Hancock Counties.

1-800-432-7812 or [www.eaaa.org](http://www.eaaa.org)

**SeniorsPlus:** Serving Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin Counties.

1-800-427-1241 or [www.seniorsplus.org](http://www.seniorsplus.org)

**Spectrum Generations:** Serving Kennebec, Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc and Somerset Counties.

1-800-639-1553 or [www.spectrumgenerations.org](http://www.spectrumgenerations.org)

**Southern Maine Agency on Aging:** Serving Cumberland and York Counties.

1-800-427-7411 or [www.smaaa.org](http://www.smaaa.org)

## What's New

Learn how to prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse: **Prevent Medicare Fraud**

### **Medicare Fraud 101**

According to Government estimates, Medicare lost \$52 billion to fraud, abuse and improper billing in FY2017. Medicare fraud typically involves rogue health care providers or medical suppliers who bill the program for services, equipment or medication that they don't actually provide, or else inflate the cost of those items. Some will even falsify patients' diagnoses to justify unnecessary tests, surgeries and other procedures or write prescriptions for patients they've never examined. Others use genuine patient information, sometimes obtained through identity theft, to create fake claims.

One of the most effective ways to combat Medicare fraud is to review your Medicare statements and make sure the dates and services listed are correct. If something doesn't look right, call your medical provider's office.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

### **Free Medicare Device Scam**

One tell-tale sign that should make every consumer suspicious is when something is offered "for free." These free offer scams are often associated with Medicare. The program spends around \$6 billion a year on medical devices, and a market this big draws scammers. In a medical equipment scam, someone reaches out with an offer of a "free" brace, wheelchair or other device. All they need is your Medicare number. Once they have it, scammers can use it to bill the government for devices and services that aren't needed.

Medicare fraud results in higher deductibles and copays for Medicare beneficiaries, and can even put affected patients at risk. Be suspicious of unsolicited free offers and never give out your Medicare number to anyone who isn't a trusted health care provider.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

### **Becky From Medicare**

For the past few months thousands of robocalls have been hitting U.S. phone lines claiming to be "Becky, from Medicare." And trust us, this is a conversation you'll want to skip.

A target will receive a prerecorded call from "Becky from Medicare" and is asked to press 1 to talk to a representative to learn about free genetic testing. For those who interact with Becky (or one of her friendly colleagues), she'll claim they are eligible for genetic testing to screen for diseases that Medicare will pay for. They will ask for the target's Medicare number and mailing address to send a test kit with instructions.

This is a scam, pure and simple. All these crooks want is your Medicare number so they can bill Medicare for tests, devices - whatever their flavor of the day. These fraudulent charges cost Medicare billions each year.

To protect yourself - and save taxpayer dollars - only share your Medicare number with trusted health care providers; calls out of the blue for free resources from Medicare are scams - full stop.

### **Protect Yourself This Open Enrollment**

#### Free Health Journals

Your local AAA has *free* Health Journals available! Call us today at 1-877-353-3771.

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