



# Medical Identity Theft Tip Sheet

## Tips for Protecting Yourself and Your Medicare

Medical identity (ID) theft occurs when someone steals personal information – such as your name and Medicare number (this also includes any Medicare Advantage, Medigap or supplemental, prescription drug, or other health ID numbers) – and uses the information to bill your insurance for supplies or services you did not receive. Typical examples are medical treatment, medical equipment, prescription drugs, and surgery. Not only can this affect your finances, but this can also endanger your care.

When you fall prey to consumer scams and give out your Medicare number, your Medicare number is considered to be “compromised” as a result of medical identity theft. If this happens, it is recommended to request a new Medicare number from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) by calling 1-800 Medicare to prevent any further abuse.

### When to Contact Your Local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

- You gave out your Medicare number:
  - Over the phone or internet to someone offering genetic testing, coronavirus testing or supplies, back or knee braces, etc.
  - At a fair or other gathering as a check-in or to receive “free” services
  - In response to a television or radio commercial, postcard, or Facebook/print ad
  - To receive more information or to sign in at a Medicare Open Enrollment event
  - To someone offering to deliver milk or other groceries to you
  - To someone claiming Medicare will cover housekeeping services
- You were contacted by your doctor to cancel appointments since, unbeknownst to you, you were signed up for hospice care.
- You received boxes of braces, testing kits, or other medical supplies in the mail that you did not request.
- You were contacted by a debt collection company for a provider bill you do not owe.
- Your Medicare and/or Medicare Advantage plan denies or limits your coverage or benefits because of a medical condition you do not have or says you already received a product or service when you did not.

## What Can You Do to Stop Medical Identity Theft?

Medical identity theft can take many forms and is used in many different tactics and schemes. Be cautious if anyone asks you for personal or medical information over the phone, door to door, through email, or at a health fair. Here's how to protect yourself:

- Never give out your Medicare number to anyone other than your doctor, health care provider, or other trusted representative.
- Protect your Medicare number by protecting your Medicare card as you would a credit card.
- Never give out your Medicare number to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.
- Understand that Medicare and Social Security already have your Medicare and Social Security number so if someone calls, emails, or texts claiming they need it, don't give it to them. Instead, find the organization's contact information on your own (don't use caller ID) and call or email them directly to discuss the situation.
- Be cautious of anyone who comes to your door offering "free" testing, treatments, or supplies for genetic diseases, cancer, or the coronavirus.
- Do not click on links from sources you don't know, as this could put your computer or device at risk. Make sure the anti-malware and anti-virus software on your computer are up to date.
- Be cautious when purchasing medical supplies from unverified or unknown sources, including online advertisements and email/phone solicitations.

### Other Identity Theft Resources

| Compromised Medicare Number | Compromised Social Security Number                               |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1-800-Medicare (633-4227)   | <a href="http://www.identitytheft.gov">www.identitytheft.gov</a> |

### How Can Your Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Help?

Your local SMP is ready to provide you with the information you need to **PROTECT** yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; **DETECT** potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and **REPORT** your concerns. SMPs and their trained teams help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also can provide information and educational presentations.

**To locate your local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) visit:**  
**[www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org) or Your Community Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP):**

CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES OF NEWPORT COUNTY – 401-848-4185

DIOCESE OF PROVIDENCE/UNITED WAY OF RI – 401-519-0378

EASTBAY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM – 401-435-7876

TRI-COUNTY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM NORTH & SOUTH – 401-349-7560 EXT 2635

WESTBAY COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM – 401-921-1558

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