



January 2019 Fraud Prevention Fact

Happy New Year! The Missouri SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) exists to make sure that seniors know about the latest Medicare scams. Medicare fraud costs the government (and thus consumers) an estimated \$6.8 million each hour.

The main focus of the SMP is on Medicare fraud. However, we also want to make you aware of the many other ways in which scammers are trying to steal from bank accounts and credit card accounts.

To help protect yourself from Medicare fraud, the Missouri SMP offers these three tips:

Don't give out any personal information – including bank account, credit cards, Social Security card numbers or Medicare numbers – to anyone you do not know. That includes someone who phones you claiming to be with your bank, Medicare, Social Security or the IRS. The government agencies generally don't phone you, and they already know the information. The IRS also won't call or email you and threaten to arrest you.

Don't fall for the grandparent scam. That happens when a frantic person calls claiming to be a family member or friend a relative who is either ill or in jail and needing emergency money. The aim is to get you so worked up that you send money or other forms of payment before you even have time to think. Check out the stories before you act. It's most likely a scam.

Rely on your personal primary care physician to order any durable medical equipment (scooters, wheelchairs, etc.) or to prescribe you special diabetic shoes. Don't rely on salespeople to tell you what you need. Ask your doctor.

As always, report suspected Medicare fraud to the Missouri SMP at 1-888-515-6565.