



## OIG Report Highlights SMP Performance

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Medicare Messenger | July 2020

Rebecca Kinney Director, Office of Healthcare  
Information and Counseling Administration for  
Community Living

Every year the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) releases a report on the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP). The 2019 OIG SMP Report was released on June 30, 2020. The report highlights SMP performance for the 2019 calendar year nationally and provides state-specific breakouts for each SMP Performance Measure.

Here is a brief synopsis from the 2019 report:

In 2019, the 54 SMP projects had a total of 6,875 active team members who conducted a total of 28,146 group outreach and education events, reaching an estimated 1.6 million people. In addition, the projects had 320,590 individual interactions with, or on behalf of, a Medicare beneficiary.

For 2019, the SMP projects reported \$2.4 million in expected Medicare recoveries. Almost all of these recoveries came from one project that uncovered a fraud scheme that encouraged low-income senior citizens to submit DNA samples for medically unnecessary genetic testing. Three defendants were sentenced and ordered to pay a total of \$2.3 million in restitution and forfeitures. In addition,

cost avoidance totaled \$60,971, while savings to beneficiaries and others totaled \$20,150.

In addition, the SMP program released a consumer fraud alert on genetic testing. The alert advises beneficiaries to be suspicious of strangers who offer free genetic tests. It also advises beneficiaries to be cautious about sharing their personal information, including their Medicare identification number, and warns that this information can be used to fraudulently bill Medicare and Medicaid. The SMP projects conducted 1,467 group events covering genetic testing fraud issues in 2019; these events reached 97,455 people.

### Results Since 1997

Since the SMP program's inception 23 years ago:

Total expected recoveries to Medicare and Medicaid attributable to the projects from 1997 through 2019 were \$122.1 million.

Total savings to beneficiaries and others were approximately \$7.1 million.

Total cost avoidance on behalf of Medicare, Medicaid, beneficiaries, and others was \$10.1 million.

### SUMMARY:

#### In 2019, the 54 projects:

- had 6,875 active team members;
- conducted 28,146 group outreach and education events; and
- had 320,590 individual interactions with, or on behalf of, a Medicare beneficiary.

The projects also had the following results:

- \$2.4 million in expected Medicare recoveries that were attributable to the projects;
- \$60,971 in cost avoidance on behalf of Medicare, Medicaid, beneficiaries, and others; and
- \$20,150 in total savings to beneficiaries and others.

### OIG Report Page:

<https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Resources-for-SMPs/OIG-Report.aspx>

### 2019 OIG Report by State: ARKANSAS

#### 2019 Performance Measures

▪ Total number of active SMP team members	124
▪ Total number of SMP team members hours	5,877
▪ Number of group outreach and education events	582
▪ Estimated number of people reached through group outreach and education events	15,437
▪ Number of individual interactions with, or on behalf of, a Medicare beneficiary	311
▪ Expected Medicare recoveries attributable to the project	\$53

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Inside Medicare	Pgs 2-3
Care Compare	Pg 4
SS Services	Pg 5
Volunteer Spotlight	Pg 6
Elder LGBTQ	Pg 7
Fraud in the News	Pg 8
Scams	Pg 9
Calendar of Events	Pg 10
Phone Numbers/Websites	Pg 11
SMP Mission/Partners	Pg 12

# INSIDE MEDICARE —

## MEDICARE and CORONAVIRUS— What You Need to Know

What Medicare covers with regard to coronavirus—

...excerpt:

If your doctor orders a COVID-19 test for you, Medicare covers all of the costs. You should not have any co-pay, no matter what Medicare plan you're enrolled in. There's no vaccine for COVID-19 at this time, but when one becomes available, Medicare will cover it.

Medicare also covers all medically necessary hospitalizations. This includes extra days in the hospital for in-patients who were on the verge of being discharged, but were diagnosed with COVID-19 and had to stay longer under quarantine.

Medicare also recently expanded its coverage of telehealth services to enable beneficiaries across the country to receive a wider range of healthcare services from doctors without having to travel to a healthcare facility.

Doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers can deliver telehealth services. Medicare beneficiaries can receive telehealth services in their home, as well as in any healthcare facility, a physician's office, hospital, nursing home, or rural health clinic.

Telehealth services include routine office visits, mental health counseling, and preventive health screenings for cancer and other illnesses. During this emergency, Medicare will pay for telehealth services at the same rates as in-person services. ...

**Medicare and Coronavirus: What You Need to Know**

April 2, 2020 by Seema Verma, Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

### **TIDBIT:**

During the public health emergency, CMS is paying for telehealth services at the same rate as in-person visits. More than 3 million beneficiaries have had telemedicine visits over the phone.

## Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA OEP)

**January 1 - March 31**

Beneficiaries already enrolled in Medicare Advantage Plans may:

- Switch between MA plans; OR
- Switch to Original Medicare with or without Part D

Change is effective the first of the following month.

## 4 ways to pay your Medicare premium:

1. **Pay online through your secure Medicare account** (MyMedicare.gov) — You can pay by credit card, debit card, or from your checking or savings account.
2. **NEW OPTION—Pay directly from your savings or checking account through your bank's online bill payment service** — learn what information you need to have ready when you contact your bank to set up this service.
3. **Sign up for Medicare Easy Pay**, a free service that automatically deducts your premium payments from your savings or checking account each month. We'll deduct your premium from your bank account, usually on the 20th of the month.
4. **Mail your payment to Medicare** — You can pay by check, money order, credit card, or debit card. Fill out the payment coupon that comes with your bill. Payments sent without the coupon may be delayed.

If you pay by credit/debit card, enter the account information and expiration date as it appears on your card. Be sure to sign the coupon.

Mail your Medicare payment coupon and payment to:

*Medicare Premium Collection Center  
PO Box 790355  
St. Louis, MO 63179-0355*

## Medicare's Fall Open Enrollment occurs each year from October 15 — December 7

**This is the time to review your current Medicare health and drug coverage. If you are dissatisfied with your coverage for next year, make changes during Fall Open Enrollment.**

- Any change you make during Fall Open Enrollment will take effect January 1.
- If you have Medicare Advantage, you can also switch to Original Medicare. To get drug coverage, you should also join a Part D plan.
- If you have Original Medicare, take a look at next year's Medicare & You handbook to know your Medicare costs and benefits for the upcoming year.
- If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Part D plan, you should receive an Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) and/or Evidence of Coverage (EOC) from your plan. Review these notices for any changes in the plan's costs, benefits, and/or rules for the upcoming year.

## Help is out there.

Use Medicare's Plan Finder tool if you need help finding Part D plans. The Plan Finder tool compares plans based on the drugs you need, the pharmacy you visit, and your drug costs.

If you want to join a Medicare Advantage Plan, call 1-800-MEDICARE to find out which plans are in your area. When you receive the list of plans, check the plans' websites or call them to see which best fits your needs.

If you research a plan online, also call the plan itself to confirm what you have learned. Make sure the plan includes your doctors and hospitals in its network. Confirm that the plan covers all your drugs, and that your pharmacies are in the preferred network.

Call 800-224-6330 or email the Arkansas Senior Health Insurance Information Program (AR SHIIP) at insurance.SHIIP@arkansas.gov. They will help you understand your Medicare coverage options and navigate any changes.

### MEDICARE TELEHEALTH VISITS

For new or established patients.

A visit with a provider that uses audio and visual telecommunication systems between a provider and a patient in real time.

On a temporary, emergency basis, Medicare can pay for office, hospital, and other visits furnished via telehealth across the country and including in patient's places of residence. These visits are paid at the same rate as regular, in-person visits.

A range of healthcare providers (doctors, nurse practitioners, clinical psychologists, and licensed clinical social workers, etc.) may offer telehealth services. Providers are given the flexibility to reduce or waive co-insurance and deductible for telehealth visits.

### VIRTUAL CHECK-INS

For established patients.

A brief (5-10 minutes) patient-initiated communication with a provider via telephone, text message, email or patient portal to decide whether an office visit or other service is needed. Videos or images may be sent to a provider. The communication is not related to a medical visit within the previous 7 days and does not lead to a medical visit within the next 24 hours. The patient must verbally consent to receive virtual check-in services. Medicare coinsurance and deductible would generally apply to these services

### E-VISITS

For established patients.

A non-face-to-face, patient-initiated communication between a patient and their provider through an online patient portal. Patient must generate the initial inquiry and must verbally consent to the services. The communications can occur over a 7-day period. Medicare coinsurance and deductible would generally apply to these services.

SOURCE: <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/medicare-telemedicine-health-care-provider-fact-sheet>

“When I talk of forgiveness I mean the belief that you can come out the other side a better person. A better person than the one being consumed by anger and hatred. Remaining in that state locks you in a state of victimhood, making you almost dependent on the perpetrator. If you can find it in yourself to forgive, then you are no longer chained to the perpetrator.” —Archbishop Desmond Tutu

## WHO ARE WE?

The Arkansas Senior Medicare Patrol (AR 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 help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against healthcare fraud. Your SMP can help with your questions, concerns or complaints about potential fraud issues and errors. We also provide free informational and educational presentations in your area.

**AR SMP**  
**866-726-2916**

[www.facebook.com/arsmp](https://www.facebook.com/arsmp)

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/daabhs/asm>

Kathleen.Pursell@dhs.arkansas.gov

## Governor's Advisory Council on Aging (GACA)

The purpose of the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging (GACA) is to advise the Governor and the Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Services about the **needs of older Arkansans and the programs that serve them.**

Any citizen with suggestions or issues of concern related to senior Arkansans, may contact the GACA member who represents his or her area, or write to the Division of Aging, Adult, and Behavioral Health Services, PO Box 1437, Slot S530, Little Rock AR 72203-1437. Telephone: (501) 682-2441.

SOURCE:

[https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/daabhs/aging-and-adult-services/organizations-and-links/gaca?\\_ga=2.5164085.744879193.1594395233-672022397.1574714386](https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/daabhs/aging-and-adult-services/organizations-and-links/gaca?_ga=2.5164085.744879193.1594395233-672022397.1574714386)

Check out [Care Compare](#) to get personalized results about doctors, hospitals, and other health care services in your area. **With Care Compare, you can get contact information, directions, and compare quality and/or star ratings for:**

- Doctors & other providers
- Hospitals
- Local nursing homes
- Hospice & home health agencies
- Dialysis facilities
- Inpatient rehabilitation centers & long-term care hospitals

Find the care you need—check out [Care Compare](#) today!

[https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/?utm\\_campaign=20200909\\_emd\\_cc\\_gal&utm\\_content=english&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/?utm_campaign=20200909_emd_cc_gal&utm_content=english&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

**Watch this short video** to learn more:

[https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/?utm\\_campaign=20200909\\_emd\\_cc\\_gal&utm\\_content=english&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/?utm_campaign=20200909_emd_cc_gal&utm_content=english&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

## 5 steps to help fight social isolation during the coronavirus pandemic:

### 1. Assess how connected you are

What does your support system look like? How strong is your support network? Have you assessed how connected you are? Find out! The AARP Foundation offers a short assessment as part of its Connect2Affect program: <https://connect2affect.org/>. The assessment also offers recommendations and resources for fighting isolation.

### 2. Take advantage of the resources out there

Find local volunteer groups to help you with everything from getting groceries to lessons on how to use Zoom. Check out resources to help with issues ranging from isolation to grief and financial concerns: <https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/>

### 3. Talk to someone

Talking with someone else will help alleviate the feeling of loneliness.

Did you know you can call AARP's Community Connections Friendly Voice program to request a call from a trained volunteer. You don't have to be cut off from other people! Go to: <https://aarpcommunityconnections.org/friendly-voices/>

Part of AARP Community Connections is The Mighty, a safe, supportive online community where you can share your experiences with other people facing similar health conditions who know how you are feeling. Go to: <https://themighty.com/>

### 4. Be aware of how your health affects your social connections

One contributor to feeling isolated and lonely, which is often overlooked, is hearing loss. Do you find yourself having trouble understanding conversations, or having to turn the volume up when listening to music, TV or the radio? Talk to your doctor. Hearing loss can be corrected.

### 5. Volunteer

If you are physically able, please consider volunteering. Some volunteer opportunities only require a telephone or laptop. It's a great way to meet people and to put your experience to good use. AARP has a Volunteer Opportunity Board that tells you about organizations in your area. Go to: <https://www.aarp.org/giving-back/>

**You can also volunteer for the AR SMP—call 866-726-2916.**

SOURCE: <https://www.lgbtqnation.com/2020/06/five-things-lgbtq-older-adults-can-get-connected-overcome-social-isolation/>



**WHAT SS WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT ACCESSING SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC:**

The Social Security Administration is committed to providing uninterrupted benefits and vital services the public relies on, especially during the current coronavirus pandemic.

The public can speak with a representative by calling (800) 772-1213 or their local Social Security office. Local office phone numbers are available online with the [Social Security Office Locator](#).

SSA's offices are not providing service for walk-in visitors, however SSA may be

able to schedule an appointment for limited, critical issues if they cannot help someone by phone and if they cannot get the information they need or conduct their business online.

Social Security has secure and convenient **online services** at <https://www.ssa.gov/onlineservices/?eType=EmailBlastContent&elid=36914782-c5ae-4473-872c-72d3c900fced>

Online services:

- Apply for [Retirement](#), [Disability](#), and [Medicare](#) benefits;
- Check the status of an application or appeal;
- Request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas);
- Print a benefit verification letter; and
- Much more...

**EXERCISE CAN HELP BUILD YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM!**

**With covid-19 worries, at-home exercise plans can keep you healthy**

**LaVona Traywick** stated in an article by Consumer Reports that while it is important to stay active, pick something you will enjoy so you will stick with it!

“The older you are, the more quickly you lose physical fitness,” says LaVona Traywick, an assistant professor in the department of occupational therapy at the **University of Central Arkansas**.

“Deconditioning can start in as little as one week.”

Did you know that not only can exercise help improve your overall health, another health benefit is that [exercise can help build your immune system too](#).

For short video classes targeted to an older population search **Go4Life on YouTube**: [https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=go4life+exercises+for+seniors](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=go4life+exercises+for+seniors)

SOURCE:  
[https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/with-covid-19-worries-at-home-exercise-plans-can-keep-you-healthy/2020/07/24/0c3edbdcb709-11ea-aca5-ebb63d27e1ff\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/with-covid-19-worries-at-home-exercise-plans-can-keep-you-healthy/2020/07/24/0c3edbdcb709-11ea-aca5-ebb63d27e1ff_story.html)

**Protect Yourself from Social Security Scams**

Scammers are pretending to be government employees. Learn how to protect yourself and report scams.



[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

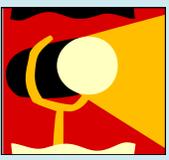
<https://faq.ssa.gov/en-us/Topic/article/KA-10018>

It is **ALWAYS** a scam if ... an unsolicited caller asks you to wire money or pay with a prepaid credit card or gift card.

**What to do about SPAM TEXT MESSAGES:**

DO NOT reply to unsolicited text messages, and DO NOT click on links in the message. The scamster is phishing for personal and financial information on your phone!

If you are an AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile or Sprint subscriber, you can report spam texts to your carrier. **Simply copy the original message and forward it by text to 7726 (SPAM), free of charge.**



# SMP VOLUNTEERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT!

Really Special and Valuable People!



"I shared SMP information with my Beta Sigma Phi group every month during this pandemic. I simply called them and read the information over the phone or emailed it to them. It was so easy!" — Judy Ramer

"I picked up SMP information curb side at the SMP office. Do you know it only took me a couple of hours to make 29 phone calls and share the Scam Alerts! It was an enjoyable way to pass the afternoon!"

— Margie Jones



"Every month I receive an email with the latest SMP Scam Alert information. I sent out COVID-19 Scam Alerts via email blasts to over 600 people on my email list during this pandemic. It was a simple few clicks!"

— Nancy Bailey

"I can't get around like I used to & especially during this scary time. SMP made it so easy for me to volunteer! I picked up the phone and shared information in these SMP VIA newsletters. Thank you, SMP!"

— Juanita Russell



## SORRY YOU'RE LEAVING

It's never easy to say goodbye to friends! Some of our long-term volunteers from the Retired Nurses Group at Woodland Heights are moving—some to be with family in other states, and others are just moving across town to a different housing community.



### Rosalie, Ruth and Rose...

We will MISS YOU so much! We THANK YOU, appreciate you and LOVE YOU for all you have done for the AR SMP program! It was such a joy to get to know you! You will never be forgotten! Stay in touch! Best wishes always.

*Dear Kathleen and Dee, Just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed our monthly meetings at Woodland Heights. They were so informative and also a lot of fun. I felt very good about participating in the SMP program, it is so worthwhile to the senior residents and very much needed. Really enjoyed being a volunteer.*

*Love, Rosalie*

## A Note From SMP Program Director Kathleen Pursell

It's important to take the time to show appreciation for the relationships we cherish both in our work lives and our personal lives.



By serving as a SMP volunteer, you each unselfishly show that you love and care for the seniors in your community, above yourselves.

It has been overwhelming to see how you all continued your efforts to protect your peers throughout the state during this Coronavirus pandemic! Among other things, you made calls to friends and family members, reading current scam alerts over the phone—this was a great way to reach out to someone who may have been isolated and who welcomed hearing a friendly voice on the other end of the line! This kept seniors informed, protected and connected during an otherwise, scary and lonely time! That takes a special person, dedicated and committed, but mostly a volunteer with a caring heart. Keep up the excellent work!

We can endure this pandemic crisis with your help! Be strong, be safe, wear a mask, social distance, and wash your hands! We appreciate you and LOVE YOU, OUR SMP VOLUNTEERS!

## VOCABULARY—

### What is Cybercrime and Online Fraud?

Cybercrime and online fraud is any illegal activity involving the internet, such as websites, chat rooms, email, and social media accounts. These crimes involve the use of the internet to communicate false or fraudulent representations to individuals and businesses. These crimes may include, but are not limited to advance-fee

schemes, non-delivery of goods or services, or computer hacking or employment / business opportunity schemes.

A cybercrime can cause great financial and emotional harm to anyone. Small businesses, senior citizens, military members, and young adults, along with their families, can be particularly vulnerable to a cybercrime. Go to [Fraudsupport.org](https://fraudsupport.org) for resources if you have been impacted by cybercrime.

SOURCE: <https://fraudsupport.org/>

## Elder LGBTQ Information

### Beyond *Bostock*: The Future of LGBTQ Civil Rights

On June 15, 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark 6-3 decision affirming that the prohibition on sex discrimination in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 extends to discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

By stating "it is impossible to discriminate against a person for being homosexual or transgender without discriminating against that individual based on sex" **the court's decision has much larger implications, providing a critical tool to address the widespread discrimination that LGBTQ people face not just in employment but in other key areas of life as well.**

The court's broad holding could advance LGBTQ equality under civil rights statutes that prohibit sex discrimination, such as Title IX, the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Fair Housing Act, and the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. However, following the court's decision federal agencies have attempted to eliminate protections for LGBTQ people in health care and access to homeless shelters.

The Supreme Court's decision in *Bostock* was a massive step forward in protecting millions of LGBTQ workers from discrimination and advancing equal rights for LGBTQ people, but the fight for equality under the law is not over.

[Read more »](#)

*Bostock v. Clayton County*

SOURCE: Center for American Progress: [https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2020/08/26/489772/beyond-bostock-future-lgbtq-civil-rights/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=amprog\\_elq&utm\\_campaign=27&utm\\_content=42696](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbtq-rights/reports/2020/08/26/489772/beyond-bostock-future-lgbtq-civil-rights/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=amprog_elq&utm_campaign=27&utm_content=42696)

## COVID-19 & LGBTQ OLDER PEOPLE

### LGBTQ ELDERS ARE LESS LIKELY TO SEEK LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES

With a lesser likelihood to have a support network, LGBTQ older people must often rely on long-term care services. Whether in-home services or residential care, 60% of LGBTQ respondents are concerned about discrimination and 40% are not comfortable being out to their provider. For some older LGBTQ elders, the fear of discrimination and stigma includes the risk of racial bias. Compared to white LGBTQ older people, African American and Latinx LGBTQ older people show greater concern about being treated unfairly in long-term care.

SOURCE: <https://www.sageusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/covid19-elder-issuebrief-032720b-1-1.pdf>



## **Man Pleads Guilty to Healthcare Fraud**

The owner and operator of a telemarketing operation pleaded guilty to charges he was part of a plan to commit health-care fraud. The operation, targeting Medicare recipients, generated orders for durable medical equipment and CGx cancer genetic testing. Doctors' signatures on prescriptions were obtained in exchange for bribes and illegal kickbacks. The owner faces a maximum penalty of 10 years in federal prison.

SOURCE: <https://www.tbreporter.com/courts/pasco-man-pleads-guilty-in-health-care-fraud-plot/>

## **Nurse practitioner pleads guilty to Medicare fraud**

Illinois—A nurse practitioner pleaded guilty to charges of healthcare fraud admitting to submitting, during a two-month period, 251 false claims to Medicare for medically unnecessary visits to nursing home residents and falsely documenting inflated services to receive a higher reimbursement from Medicare.

SOURCE: <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/payer-issues/illinois-nurse-practitioner-pleads-guilty-to-medicare-fraud.html>

## **Doctor To Pay \$400,000 In Medicare Fraud Case**

CA—A doctor and owner of a clinic that provides physical, occupational and chiropractic services agreed to pay \$400,000 to resolve allegations of fraudulent charges to Medicare for physical and occupational therapy performed by unlicensed individuals. This case was brought about by a whistleblower who will receive 15% of the settlement.

SOURCE: <https://patch.com/california/san-francisco/san-francisco-doctor-pay-400-000-medicare-fraud-case>

## **Addiction centers in \$122 million settlement of fraud claims**

GA—More than twelve whistleblower lawsuits allege that a company that runs mental health and substance abuse treatment centers in several states billed Medicare and other health programs for medically unnecessary services. The cases allege the centers admitted people who did not need to be hospitalized and also kept patients longer than necessary. One of the company's psychiatric facilities is accused of routinely using drugs to sedate and chemically restrain patients. The company will pay \$122 million to settle the whistleblower case.

SOURCE: <https://www.ajc.com/news/state--regional/addiction-centers-122-million-settlement-fraud-claims/5TessuzZkBtEZnoDH58uAM/>

## **Genetic Testing Kickback and Bribery Scheme**

PA—A medical assistant and another employee of a primary care physician's office participated in a conspiracy to receive bribes and kickbacks in cash up to \$5,000 in exchange for collecting DNA samples from Medicare patients. The samples were sent to clinical laboratories for genetic testing. The violation of the anti-kickback statute is punishable by a maximum of five years in prison and a fine of \$250,000. Sentencing is scheduled.

SOURCE: <https://www.stl.news/trenton-n-j-medical-assistant-amber-harris-admits-role-in-genetic-testing-kickback/348099/>

## **\$153 Million in Western Union Refunds**

Bridget Small  
FTC / Consumer Education Specialist

Refund checks worth about \$153 million are going out to over 109,000 people who sent money to scammers through Western Union wire transfers. The first refunds are going to people who signed and returned a pre-filled claim form and agreed with the dollar amount stated on the form.

SOURCE: [https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/03/153-million-western-union-refunds?utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/03/153-million-western-union-refunds?utm_source=govdelivery)

# Be aware of **SCAM(S)**:

Report all scams to the Arkansas SMP — **1-866-726-2916**

## Scam Awareness

The Inspector General of Social Security continues to warn Americans about widespread phone scams where callers may impersonate Social Security or tell you your Social Security number or card has been found in connection with criminal activity, in an attempt to gain your trust and steal your money.

### The Social Security Administration will NEVER :

- Call to threaten you with arrest or legal action if you do not immediately pay a debt, fine, or fee.
- Tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended, or offer to increase your benefits, or resolve identity theft problems in exchange for payment.
- Require payment via retail gift cards, prepaid debit cards, wire transfers, or by mailing cash.
- Demand secrecy in handling a Social Security-related problem, or tell you to make up a story to tell your friends, family, or store/bank employees.

- Text you unsolicited to tell you about a problem with your Social Security number or benefits.
- Email you attached documents containing your personally identifiable information.

Be very cautious if you receive an unsolicited call from the government and you don't recognize the problem or issue they're calling about. Do not provide personally identifiable information over the phone.

Discuss major financial decisions with trusted friends or family. If you owe money to Social Security, the agency will mail you a letter with payment options and appeal rights.

### If you receive a suspicious call:

- **HANG UP!**
- **DO NOT GIVE THEM MONEY OR PERSONAL INFORMATION!**
- **REPORT SOCIAL SECURITY SCAMS AT [OIG.SSA.GOV](http://OIG.SSA.GOV)**
- **REPORT OTHER IMPOSTER SCAMS AT [FTC.GOV/COMPLAINT](http://FTC.GOV/COMPLAINT).**

## Scammers Use Contact Tracing to Scam Victims

Scammers may contact you by phone, text, or email posing as COVID-19 contact tracers working for the Arkansas Department of Health to help stop the spread of the virus.

### What You Should Know:

The Arkansas Department of Health is using contact tracing to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by identifying people who have tested positive or may have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. It is important to talk with contact tracers and give them the information they need. However, if you are contacted, there are things you need to know to verify they are legitimate:

### Tips:

- DO NOT give bank account information or any other form of payment over the phone to pay scam artists posing as contact tracers—CONTACT TRACING DOES NOT COST YOU MONEY.
- DO NOT GIVE your SS# OR MEDICARE #
- Contact Tracers WILL NOT send a text with a link to click on. DO NOT click on links in emails or text messages.
- Contact Tracers WILL NOT give you the name of the infected person with whom you have supposedly been in contact.

### Contact Tracers WILL:

- ◆ Ask your address and date of birth
- ◆ Ask where you have been
- ◆ Ask who you have been in contact with during the days of exposure (at least 15 min or more)
- ◆ Ask you to quarantine

### How to Respond:

Healthy skepticism is helpful! If a potential contact tracer calls stating they are from the health department, take their name, then hang up and verify the authenticity by contacting the Arkansas Department of Health yourself at (800) 803-7847 or [ADH.Coronavirus@Arkansas.gov](mailto:ADH.Coronavirus@Arkansas.gov). Share this information to prevent others from becoming victims of the scam.

## Upcoming Arkansas SMP Activities

**PLEASE NOTE: ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO COVID-19**

DATE	ACTIVITY
November 3	ELECTION DAY
November 30	SMP Presentation — O.L.L.I.E.— VIRTUAL
December 9	SMP 10th Annual Volunteer Appreciation (TBD)

We would welcome any opportunity to present the SMP message statewide. Please contact the Arkansas SMP to schedule a presentation in your area. We are available for virtual presentations.

Call **1-866-726-2916**

# PROTECT. DETECT. REPORT.

**BILLIONS OF DOLLARS** are lost each year to healthcare fraud, waste and abuse, with an estimated cost of Medicare fraud alone of over \$13 billion annually.

Most Medicare and Medicaid payment errors are simple mistakes by doctors, providers, or suppliers. However, there are always a few who intentionally cheat these government programs. And who picks up the tab for healthcare fraud? As taxpayers, we ALL do.

Because senior citizens are the #1 target for healthcare fraud and scams, the goal of the Arkansas Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is to empower seniors,

their families, friends and caregivers, to be protective of their Medicare and personal information.

The SMP offers free educational presentations statewide about recognizing the latest scams, how to protect personal information, and how to identify and report billing errors, illegal marketing and charges for unnecessary services. We furnish free materials and tools to help.

**VOLUNTEER!** We need your help in combatting fraud waste and abuse. Join our team of over 100 SMP volunteers throughout the state, and receive the training you need to help empower seniors to protect and preserve the healthcare benefits they rely on.



Call or email the Arkansas SMP if you have questions, are interested in volunteering, or would like to schedule a free speaker.

VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED

**866-726-2916 / Kathleen.Pursell@dhs.arkansas.gov**



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[www.facebook.com/arsmp](http://www.facebook.com/arsmp)

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

**AANHR**—AR Advocates for Nursing Home Residents **501-607-8976**  
**AFMC**—AR Foundation for Medical Care **1-888-354-9100**  
**Area Agency on Aging** **1-800-986-3505**  
**AG-Attorney General (Consmr Prot Div)** **1-800-482-8982**  
**AG Medicaid Fraud Hotline** **1-866-810-0016**  
**APS**—Adult Protective Services (DHS) **1-800-482-8049**  
**Alzheimer’s Arkansas** **501-224-0021**  
**Arkansas Rehabilitation Services** **1-800-981-4463**  
**AR SMP (Healthcare Fraud Complaints)** **1-866-726-2916**  
**Better Business Bureau (BBB)** **501-664-7274**  
**CMS**—(Medicare)— (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services)  
(1-800MEDICARE) **1-800-633-4227**  
**Community Health Centers of AR** **1-877-666-2422**  
**Coordination of Benefits** **1-855-798-2627**  
**DHS (Customer Assistance Unit)** **1-800-482-8988**  
**DHS Resource Center** **1-866-801-3435**  
**Do Not Call Registry** **1-888-382-1222**  
**Elder Care Locator** **1-800-677-1116**  
**El Dorado RSVP** **1-870-864-7080**  
**Federal Trade Commission**  
Report STOLEN IDENTITY **1-877-438-4338**  
**ICan**—Increasing Capabilities Access Network **501-666-8868**  
**KEPRO -AR QIO(Quality Improvmt Org.)** **1-844-430-9504**  
**LGBT Elder Hotline** **888-234-SAGE**  
**Medicaid**—(Claims Unit) **1-800-482-5431**  
**Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG)** **1-855-527-6644**  
**MEDICARE (CMS 1-800MEDICARE)** **1-800-633-4227**  
**Medicare Part D** **1-877-772-3379**  
**Medicare Rights Center** **1-800-333-4114**  
**Mid-Delta Community Consortium** **1-870-407-9000**  
**Oaklawn Foundation/Center on Aging** **501-623-0020**  
**OIG-Nat’l Medicare Fraud Hotline** **1-800-HHS-TIPS**  
(OIG) Office of Inspector General **1-800-447-8477**  
**OLTC**—Office of Long Term Care **1-800-LTC-4887**  
**OLTC**—Abuse Complaint Section **501-682-8430**  
**Ombudsman**—State Ofc of Long Term Care **501-682-8952**  
**Resource Center (ADRC)** **1-866-801-3435**  
(DHS’S Choices in Living Resource Center)  
**RSVP of Central Arkansas** **501-897-0793**  
**SHIIP (Senior Health Ins. Info Program)** **1-800-224-6330**  
**SMP Locator**—(locate an SMP outside AR) **1-877-808-2468**  
**SSA (Social Security Administration)** **1-800-772-1213**  
Little Rock Office **1-866-593-0933**  
**SSA Fraud Hotline** **1-800-269-0271**  
**South Central Center on Aging** **1-866-895-2795**  
**South East AR Center on Aging** **1-870-673-8584**  
**Texarkana Regional Center on Aging** **1-870-773-2030**  
**Tri-County Rural Health Network** **1-870-338-8900**  
**UALR Senior Justice Center** **501-683-7153**  
**UofA Cooperative Extension Service** **501-671-2000**

## HELPFUL WEBSITES:

**ADRC**—AR Aging & Disability Resource Center (DHS)—  
[www.choicesinliving.ar.gov/](http://www.choicesinliving.ar.gov/)  
**AR Advocates for Nursing Home Residents**  
(AANHR)—[www.aanhr.org](http://www.aanhr.org); e-mail: [Info@aanhr.org](mailto:Info@aanhr.org)  
**AR Long Term Care Ombudsman Program**—  
[www.arombudsman.com](http://www.arombudsman.com)  
**Arkansas Aging Initiative**—<http://aging.uams.edu/?id=4605&sid=6>  
**Arkansas Attorney General**—[www.arkansasag.gov](http://www.arkansasag.gov)  
**Arkansas Attorney General Consumer Protection**  
**Division**—e-mail: [consumer@ag.state.ar.us](mailto:consumer@ag.state.ar.us)  
**Area Agencies on Aging**—[www.daas.ar.gov/aaamap.html](http://www.daas.ar.gov/aaamap.html)  
**Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care**—[www.afmc.org](http://www.afmc.org)  
**Arkansas SMP**—[www.daas.ar.gov/asmp.html](http://www.daas.ar.gov/asmp.html)  
**BBB (Better Business Bureau)**—scams and alerts—  
<https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker/arkansas/>  
**CMS (Medicare) Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services**—  
[www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov)  
**Do Not Call**—[www.donotcall.gov](http://www.donotcall.gov)  
**Do Not Mail**—[www.DMAchoice.org](http://www.DMAchoice.org)  
**Elder Tree / Spinsterhaven**—[Spinsterhaven@gmail.com](mailto:Spinsterhaven@gmail.com)  
**Elder Care Locator**—[www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)  
**H.E.A.T**—[www.stopmedicarefraud.gov/](http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov/)  
(Healthcare Fraud Prevention and Enforcement Action Team)  
**LGBT**—National Resource Center on LGBT Aging  
<https://www.lgbtagingcenter.org/about/updatesProcess.cfm>  
**MEDICAID**—[www.Medicaid.gov](http://www.Medicaid.gov)  
**MEDICAID INSPECTOR GENERAL (OMIG)**—  
<http://omig.arkansas.gov/fraud-form>  
**MEDICARE**—[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)  
**Medicare Interactive Counselor**—  
[www.medicareinteractive.org](http://www.medicareinteractive.org)  
**Hospital Compare**—[www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov)  
**MyMedicare.gov**—[www.mymedicare.gov](http://www.mymedicare.gov)  
(Access to your personal Medicare claims information)  
**MyMedicareMatters.org** (National Council on Aging)  
**Office of Long Term Care**—[http://](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dms/Pages/oltcHome.aspx)  
[humanservices.arkansas.gov/dms/Pages/oltcHome.aspx](http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dms/Pages/oltcHome.aspx)  
**Office of Inspector General (OIG)**—email:  
[HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov](mailto:HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov)  
**Pharmaceutical Assistance Program**—  
[medicare.gov/pap/index.asp](http://medicare.gov/pap/index.asp)  
**Physician Compare**—[www.medicare.gov/find-a-doctor](http://www.medicare.gov/find-a-doctor)  
**AR SHIIP**—<https://insurance.arkansas.gov/pages/consumer-services/senior-health/>  
**SMP Locator**—[SMPResource.org](http://SMPResource.org) (locate an SMP outside of AR)  
**Social Security Administration (SSA)**—[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)  
**SSA OIG**—Report SS Fraud—<https://oig.ssa.gov/report>  
**TAP**—[www.arsinfo.org](http://www.arsinfo.org) (Telecommunications Access Program)  
**UofA Cooperative Extension Service**—[www.uaex.edu](http://www.uaex.edu)



# SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL (SMP) MISSION

“To empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, error, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.”



## TO PREVENT HEALTHCARE FRAUD—

### Protect Personal Information

- \* Treat Medicare/Medicaid and Social Security numbers like credit card numbers.
- \* Remember, Medicare will not call or make personal visits to sell anything!
- \* READ and SAVE Medicare Summary Notices (MSN) and Part D Explanation of benefits (EOB), but **shred** before discarding.

### Detect Errors, Fraud, and Abuse

- \* Always review MSN and EOB for mistakes.
- \* Compare them with your Personal Health Care Journal.
- \* Visit [www.mymedicare.gov](http://www.mymedicare.gov) to access your personal account online to look for charges for something you did not get, billing for the same thing more than once, and services that were not ordered and/or you never received.

### Report Mistakes or Questions

- \* If you suspect errors, fraud, or abuse, report it immediately! Call your provider or plan **first**.
- \* If you are not satisfied with their response, call the Arkansas SMP.

## TO RECRUIT & TRAIN VOLUNTEERS—

- \* Retired seniors;
- \* Retired health-care providers; or
- \* Retired professionals, *e.g.*, teachers, accountants, attorneys, investigators, nurses.

To receive the **Arkansas SMP Newsletter** electronically  
email: [kathleen.pursell@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:kathleen.pursell@dhs.arkansas.gov)

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Current and archived newsletters available at:

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/daabhs/asmp/smp-newsletter-archive>

## AR SMP PARTNERS

### El Dorado Connections RSVP

El Dorado, AR  
870-864-7080

### RSVP of Central Arkansas

Little Rock, AR  
501-897-0793

### Oaklawn Center on Aging Inc.

Hot Springs, AR  
501-623-0020

### Spinsterhaven

Fayetteville, AR  
[Spinsterhaven@gmail.com](mailto:Spinsterhaven@gmail.com)

### Tri County Rural Health Network

Helena, AR  
870-338-8900

### Texarkana Regional

#### Center on Aging

Texarkana, AR  
870-773-2030

### South Central Center on Aging

Pine Bluff, AR  
870-879-1440

### South East AR Educ Services Coop

#### Foster Grandparent Program

Monticello, AR  
870-367-4819

### Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Little Rock, AR  
800-224-6330



Arkansas Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

P. O. Box 1437—Slot W241

Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

[FACEBOOK.COM/ARSMP](https://www.facebook.com/ARSMP)

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/daabhs/asmp>

To Report Medicare Fraud, Waste & Abuse

Call the Toll-Free **Helpline** 8:00am—4:30pm

**1-866-726-2916**