

MEDICARE AND COVID-19 VACCINES—What you need to know:

COVID-19 vaccine distribution has begun, and the AR SMP reminds Medicare beneficiaries about scams surrounding the vaccine and also shares updated information important to you regarding Medicare billing for the vaccine.

What You Should Know:

Scammers may contact you through unsolicited advertisements, phone calls, emails and social media, and are using distraction, confusion, and perhaps lack of knowledge during these early stages of the vaccine distribution, as a way to scam you out of your personal information and money. Here are some examples: Unsolicited contact from someone claiming to be from a government agency, medical office, insurance company, or COVID-19 vaccine center requesting:

- payment for early access to a vaccine;
- a fee to put your name on a vaccine waiting list;
- personal information to determine eligibility to obtain the vaccine;
- personal information using a scare tactic stating the “government requires you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.”

TIPS:

You may need your Medicare/number card so your health care provider or pharmacy can bill Medicare; however....

- **Medicare covers the COVID-19 vaccine. There is no out of pocket cost to you. You pay NOTHING. EVEN IF YOU HAVE NO INSURANCE!**
- Medicare also covers COVID-19 lab tests, antibody tests, monoclonal antibody treatments. You pay nothing.
- Medicare covers all medically necessary hospitalizations, including if you are diagnosed with COVID-19 and may have otherwise been discharged but instead you need to stay in the hospital under quarantine; however, hospital deductibles, co-pays and coinsurance will apply.
- You cannot pay to get your name on a vaccine waiting list or to get the vaccine faster.
- No one will contact you asking for a Medicare number, Social Security number or banking information to sign you up for a vaccine.
- Medicare will never visit your home.
- Don't share your personal or health information with anyone who contacts you by unsolicited calls, texts, emails, home visits, or booths at public health fairs about the vaccine.
- Know that no one from the health department will contact you.

How to Respond:

- Each state has its own plan for deciding who is vaccinated first and how residents can get vaccines.
- Call the AR Department of Health (501) 661-2000, or go to their website for information about vaccine distribution:
 - ⇒ <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-vaccine-plan>
 - ⇒ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>
- Consult your primary care physician before undergoing any vaccination.
- For information on Medicare coverage, visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) or call 1-800-Medicare. Additionally, go to [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov); [HHS.gov](https://www.hhs.gov)/ [CMS.gov](https://www.cms.gov).
- If you believe you have been the victim of a COVID-19 fraud, report it to the FBI --800-CALL-FBI.

REPORT all scams to the Arkansas SMP—866-726-2916