



# Senior Medicare Patrol

## Preventing Medicare Fraud

Maryland Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) empowers and assists Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education. There are 19 local SMP offices throughout Maryland, representing all 23 counties and Baltimore City.

### What is Medicare fraud?

Medicare loses an estimated \$60 billion each year due to fraud, errors, and abuse. Every day, these issues affect people across the country and can lead to identify theft that can cost consumers money.

Medicare fraud happens when someone knowingly deceives Medicare to receive a payment they should not, or to receive a higher payment than they are entitled to.

Medicare errors occur when a doctor, pharmacy or medical facility inadvertently makes a mistake when billing Medicare.

### Warning signs of Medicare fraud:

- Billing for services or medical supplies that were not provided.
- Misrepresenting a diagnosis, someone's identity, or other facts to bill Medicare.
- Prescribing or providing excessive or unnecessary tests and services.
- Billing for out of pocket for services that are covered by Medicare.

### How does SMP help protect against fraud?

When a consumer contacts their local SMP, trained team members answer questions and share useful tips to help prevent problems before they happen. Consumers can also contact SMP if they think fraud, errors, or abuse have already occurred. SMP will provide confidential support to address their concerns and can help report and refer issues to the appropriate state and federal agencies for further assistance.

### Tips to prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud

- Only share your Medicare or social security number with those you trust.
- Only carry your Medicare card when you need it.
- Keep a record of all your medical visits and procedures.
- Review your Medicare statements for mistakes like charges you don't recognize or duplicate billing.
- Call your health care provider, Medicare, or your local SMP if you see something suspicious.

To find your local SMP, visit [aging.maryland.gov/smp](https://aging.maryland.gov/smp) or call 1-800-243-3425.



**SMP**  
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**Maryland**  
DEPARTMENT OF AGING

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