

FraudAlert!

Helping keep the promise.



Wisconsin SMP

July 2011 • Volume 14, No. 12

• Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center

From the Project Director. Elizabeth Conrad

Check out our website at www.wisconsinsmp.org
The Stop Medicare Fraud website allows you to search for fraud news by state. Check it out:
<http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov/innews/index.html>

Let's Get Acquainted

By Judy Steinke, Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Coordinator

This month, our featured volunteer is Carmen Pietila Cleary of Middleton. After completion of her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from the UW-Madison, Carmen was searching the web for information on health care advocacy and elder law when she read about Wisconsin SMP. She joined the project in July 2010, and she is also pursuing a Capstone Certificate in Health Consumer Advocacy through the Center for Patient Partnerships.

Carmen feels that the SMP was a natural choice for her due to her interest in health care advocacy and elder law. Even though she is a student and is employed part-time at a local health care organization, she has found time to help the SMP with numerous projects and booths. Preserving Medicare dollars is important to all generations, and Carmen states, "I encourage anyone of any age to get involved in the SMP project to help prevent health care fraud and abuse. You will not only learn a great deal about Medicare, Medicaid, and fraud prevention, but you will also be contributing to the SMP's important mission to help empower and protect seniors."

When she is not in school, working or volunteering, Carmen enjoys spending time with her husband, running, and doing outdoor photography. Thank you, Carmen, for joining the Wisconsin SMP team. We are fortunate to have someone with your passion for advocacy onboard!

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In this issue:

**Let's Get Acquainted with Carmen
Pietila Cleary, SMP Volunteer
WI SMP Volunteer Training in Madison
Cyber Attack on Batteries Plus
Recent Frauds and Scams
Study Finds Medicaid Makes a
Difference
Medicare's Preventive Services
News Briefs
Medicare & Medicaid Fraud Systems
Lacking
Medicare 2012 Trainings for
Professionals
SMP & CWAG Activities
Other Activities**

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EDITOR AND PROJECT DIRECTOR
Elizabeth Conrad

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
Patti Wiersma

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Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups
Advocacy • Membership • Elder Law

2850 Dairy Drive
Madison, WI 53718-6742
608-224-0606

www.cwag.org • econrad@cwag.org

Wisconsin SMP to Hold Volunteer Training in Madison

By Kevin Brown, Wisconsin SMP Capacity Building Grant Manager/Trainer

In June, Wisconsin SMP hosted three events in Eau Claire, Rhinelander, and Madison to recognize the dedicated volunteers and professional partners who help us spread our message of fraud prevention to Medicare beneficiaries, family members, caregivers, and professionals across the state. These events are very special because they provide Wisconsin SMP staff with a rare opportunity to thank some of our volunteers in person for their hard work on behalf of our project. They also allow participants to network with other SMP volunteers and professional partners in their area and receive updated training information from Wisconsin SMP staffers on Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse.

Wisconsin SMP conducts volunteer training sessions throughout the state on a regular basis. If you are interested in attending one of our trainings and joining our hard-working cadre of volunteers, please contact me at (800) 488-2596, ext. 315 or kbrown@cwag.org.

The next Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Training will be held on August 25 at the CWAG office in Madison from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The workshop is open to all interested volunteers and professionals, but pre-registration is required.

SMP volunteers are concerned citizens (often retired professionals) who empower seniors to prevent healthcare fraud through outreach and education. The Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Training is an in-depth workshop that provides participants with a foundation of knowledge in three main areas: the SMP program, Medicare basics, and Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse. After they are trained, SMP volunteers make presentations to groups and/or distribute materials at community events to educate Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, and professionals about how to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse.

For more information about Wisconsin SMP and to download our volunteer application form, please go to www.wisconsinsmp.org.

A Tribute to Our Wisconsin County/Tribal Elderly Benefit Specialists

Wisconsin SMP would like to show appreciation for a group of people who work tirelessly to protect seniors from fraud, waste, error, and abuse, and who fight to make sure that seniors receive the benefits they are due: Wisconsin County/Tribal Elderly Benefit Specialists.

For those unfamiliar with Wisconsin's innovative Benefit Specialist Program, here is a short description and history.

Benefit Specialists are in every county or tribe and assist people who are 60 years of age or older, regardless of income, with public and private benefit problems. They are experts in dealing with the massive amounts of confusing paperwork, laws, and regulations that are fundamental parts of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and many other benefit programs.

Benefit Specialists can also assist seniors in making sure that the senior's physician correctly bills both Medicare and the senior for medical services. They can appeal unfavorable coverage decisions by the government or by private insurance companies and Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). They

may assist seniors who are victims of telephone scams or who are involved in landlord-tenant disputes. This is just a small sample of what Benefit Specialists do each day.

Moreover, Benefit Specialists often serve vital roles as educators on issues of possible Medicare and Medicaid fraud. They can and often do teach seniors how to read Medicare Summary Notices to avoid both mistakes and intentional deception in health care provider bills. They also reach seniors about the existence and rules of the myriad of benefit programs that are available from the government and private sources, and can suggest the most effective and relevant programs for each individual senior.

First implemented statewide in 1987, the Benefit Specialist program is funded by the state budget, and with funds from Title III of the federal Older Americans Act. County and Tribal aging units and/or Aging & Disability Resource Centers also provide funding for the program. Benefit Specialists are trained and supervised by attorneys who specialize in elder law and benefit programs.

We would like to commend all past, current, and future benefit specialists for both their dedication to seniors and for helping to stop Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse. Every time a Benefit Specialist reviews a Medicare Summary Notice, he or she makes fraud, abuse, or mistakes less likely. If a bill is incorrect, the Benefit Specialist can spot this right away and either prevent the patient from paying too much or fight for a refund.

Again, the staff at Wisconsin SMP and the *Fraud Alert* salutes all Wisconsin County/Tribal Benefit Specialists. Keep up the excellent work!

What County/Tribal Elderly Benefit Specialists Should Know About Senior Medicare Patrols

You may have seen ads on TV recently featuring two Senior Medicare Patrol volunteers discussing ways to protect the Medicare and Medicaid programs from fraud, waste, error, and abuse. Despite its action-movie-sounding name, Senior Medicare Patrol volunteers from around the country are increasing their efforts through one-on-one Medicare counseling sessions, participating in community education events and conducting group education sessions for their peers rather than car chases and undercover work.

In other states, SMP and State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) volunteers combine their efforts to do the sort of casework that in Wisconsin is performed by County/Tribal Elderly Benefit Specialists. Since Wisconsin is the **only** state fortunate enough to have a system of trained paid professionals available to do one-on-one Medicare counseling, SMP volunteers here focus primarily on educating seniors on the importance of reading their Medicare Summary Notices (MSN), explanation of benefit statements, avoiding healthcare and consumer scams, protecting their personal identity, and understanding how their health care benefits work.

Volunteer outreach and education efforts will become more and more important as changes in the healthcare system continue to roll out, scary rumors about those changes swirl, and scammers try to take advantage of the fear and confusion of vulnerable seniors. In fact, volunteers screened and trained by Wisconsin SMP may be a valuable resource to you since SMP does criminal background checks on all prospective volunteers and each participant must complete a mandatory SMP Volunteer Foundations training curriculum and pass a 50-question exam.

There's another important aspect to SMP's "fraud-buster" efforts. The Wisconsin SMP project collects complaints of fraud, waste, and abuse from Medicare beneficiaries, Medicaid recipients, County/Tribal Elderly Benefit Specialists, Case Managers and other professionals (of course with their client's permission), enters them into SMART FACTS, the database designed specifically for the SMP community, and routes them to CMS and other appropriate state and regulatory entities.

Frustratingly for SMP workers (not to mention the frustrations of complainants), these entities are really geared more toward trend-spotting than the resolution of individual cases. In terms of getting a beneficiary disenrolled from an inappropriate plan, or getting a wrongful charge refunded in a more or less timely fashion, SMP can't substitute for the day-to-day work performed by Benefit Specialists.

What SMP's reporting can do, though, is build a record of systemic problems that may eventually lead to systemic fixes. That makes it worthwhile to encourage your clients to authorize you to contact SMP directly and share their experiences with our staff.

Case Study

An adult daughter received a suspicious bill (\$7,000) from a hospice provider, located in another state, for hospice services her mother received while residing in a Medicare certified skilled nursing facility. The bill arrived approximately six months after her mother passed away. The daughter knew that her mother could not have owed the hospice provider money because her mother's health coverage included Medicare and Medicaid.

When the daughter's questions regarding her mother's alleged bill could not be successfully resolved with the hospice provider, she contacted Wisconsin SMP and insisted that the matter be pursued further. What if this wasn't a simple billing error? Were other people receiving similar bills? The adult daughter suspected that had she been less involved with her mother's care, she might have gone ahead and paid the bill (as executor of her mother's estate) and that the provider could probably have made a profitable sum of money.

Thanks to the adult daughter's intervention, in this case Wisconsin SMP was able to save her from paying \$7,000.

How You Can Help

Please contact Elizabeth Conrad, Director of the Wisconsin SMP project if you suspect a billing situation that may be fraud, waste, or abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. econrad@cwag.org or by phone at 800-488-2596 extension 317.

Want to get the word out about consumer scams in your area? Tell us about your experiences so we can include them in our monthly Wisconsin SMP *Fraud Alert* newsletter. The *Fraud Alert* not only warns the public of current and continuing scams, it also features articles on topics such as credit counseling and the False Claims Act. It is widely circulated in both hardcopy and electronic formats.

Cyber Attack on Hartland Based Batteries Plus

For four days in June, botnets, which are collections of compromised computers, attacked the Hartland-based Batteries Plus website to make it unavailable to users and consumers. The company, which sells more than 50 million batteries each year, estimates it lost \$40,000 as a result. However,

Company spokesman, Mike Lehman, said that Batteries Plus customers' information remained safe during the attacks.

According to the affidavit, the botnets also targeted other businesses with website names containing the terms "battery" or "batteries." Lance Barnes, supervisory special agent for Milwaukee's FBI cyber crimes unit, said that cyber attacks of this nature are very common among businesses that use the Internet. "It's just the normal cost of doing business," he said.

Authorities are looking for the culprit in the Batteries Plus attack. Most botnet masterminds are based overseas, which makes it more difficult to investigate such attacks.

A botnet is a network of private computers infected with malicious software and controlled as a group by a criminal mastermind without the computer owners' knowledge. Botnets are used for malicious activities such as sending spam, stealing personal information, and infecting other computers with viruses. Usually, "the overall purpose for these botnets is money," Barnes said.

Botnets can target individuals who most of the time are unaware of the attack. Barnes advises that to prevent an attack, Internet users should update anti-virus software, use strong passwords with alpha and numeric characters, and never make a purchase or download anything through unsolicited email.

Source: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (7/11/2011)

Recent Frauds and Scams

In their July 14th report, the Internet Crime Complaint Center, which is a partnership between the FBI and the National White Crime Center, provided information on recent crime trends and new twists to previous scams.

A fraudulent email claiming to be from the FBI is informing recipients that they have won money but need to contact the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in Lagos, Nigeria, to provide personal information and pay a \$250 - \$350 fee. It also threatens that if the fee is not paid within 24 hours, the FBI will be coming to their home to question them and possibly arrest them on charges of terrorism, drug trafficking, or money laundering. This very official looking document even includes the seal of the FBI, reference to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and the signature of Robert Mueller, director of the FBI.

In another fraudulent email scam impersonating the FBI, the recipients are told that the FBI has been tracking their Internet activity and believes that they have visited illegal sites. Recipients are told to answer questions in an attachment that contains malware.

The Internet Crime Complaint Center has also received thousands of complaints regarding payday loan scams. The recipients of these calls are told that a complaint has been filed against them regarding a payday loan, and they must repay the loan as soon as possible to avoid court and jail time. The average amount requested is \$600. In another case, the caller stated that he was from the Attorney General's office, and that the recipient was being sued by the Internet Crime Complaint Center for not repaying a payday loan.

Finally, the red, white, and blue Medicare cards are not being replaced, but scammers continue to make calls to beneficiaries informing them that a replacement card will be issued after verification of personal and bank information. If you receive this type of call, hang up and notify your local police.

Study Finds Medicaid Makes a Difference

A new study says that signing up with Medicaid could improve one's overall health and financial security. The findings of the study are at odds with the perception that having Medicaid is no better or possibly even worse than being uninsured.

"We found that people who have Medicaid use more healthcare, have less out of pocket medical expenses and medical debt, and report that they are in better health and overall well-being than similar individuals without insurance," said Amy Finkelstein, an MIT economist and one of the study's principal investigators.

The study found that people with Medicaid were 70 percent more likely to have a regular office or clinic for their primary care, 55 percent more likely to have a regular doctor, and 35 percent more likely to have received outpatient care, as compared to the uninsured.

The study by Finkelstein and colleagues from Harvard, the National Bureau of Economic Research, and the state of Oregon is the first one of its kind since the 1970s.

It was made possible because in 2008 Oregon expanded its Medicaid program for nondisabled adults with incomes below the federal poverty line. Oregon could only afford to add 10,000 more people. Since there were far more than 10,000 people that were eligible and likely to apply, officials decided to hold a lottery. Those who won could apply for coverage; those who lost could not.

The lottery provided researchers a unique opportunity to compare a population that was identical in almost every way except for health insurance status. Normally, such a study would have been unethical to conduct because researchers could not give some people insurance and withhold it from others.

"It was literally a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Finkelstein said. She says researchers now plan to conduct interviews with 12,000 of these people and perform medical tests to find out even more about how having Medicaid compares with being uninsured.

Sources: Wisconsin State Journal (7/7/2011) and www.npr.org

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Sharing the News About Medicare's Preventive Services

Did you know that as a result of the Affordable Care Act, Medicare now covers a yearly wellness visit and many preventive screenings and services? Preventive services like these can find health problems early, when treatment works best. These services can also help keep you from getting certain diseases or illnesses.

Take Advantage of Your Yearly Wellness Visit

If you have Medicare, the yearly wellness visit is your opportunity to talk with your doctor to make sure you're getting the care you need, including a review of any prescriptions you are taking. At this visit, you and your doctor can do the following:

- Review your medical and family history
- Create a list of your current providers and prescriptions
- Take height, weight, blood pressure, and other routine measurements
- Create a screening schedule for appropriate preventive services for you
- Create a list of risk factors and treatment options for you

Get Discounts on Prescription Drugs

If you have Medicare prescription drug coverage and you're in the donut hole during 2011, you get a 50% discount on covered brand name prescription drugs you buy at the pharmacy or order through the mail. This benefit helps make your prescription drugs more affordable so you will take them as prescribed to stay healthy.

Keep You and Your Friends and Family Healthy

The best way to stay well is to live a healthy lifestyle. You can be healthier and prevent disease by exercising, eating well, keeping a healthy weight, and not smoking. Getting preventive services you need is just another way of taking good care of your health. Tell your friends and family with Medicare about them, too. Because when you share the news, you share the health.

Need More Information?

- Visit www.MyMedicare.gov to see descriptions of covered preventive services and track the services you get.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

News Briefs

According to a report from the Office of Inspector General, 61 percent of the power wheelchairs provided during the first 6 months of 2007 were medically unnecessary or had insufficient documentation to support their need. This amounts to \$95 million of the \$189 million that Medicare allowed for power wheelchairs during this period. To view the report, visit: oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-04-09-00260.pdf

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On July 6th, a New York neurologist pled guilty to participating in a scheme to defraud Medicare, the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workers' Compensation Programs, the New York State Workers' Compensation Board, the New York State Insurance Fund and various private health insurance companies. You may read more at: justice.gov/opa/pr/2011/July/11-crm-886.html

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A Maryland podiatrist pled guilty on July 6th to health care fraud and aggravated identity theft involving a scheme to bill Medicare for more than \$1.1 million. To view the press release, visit: justice.gov/usao/md/Public-Affairs/press_releases/press08/GambrillsPodiatristPleadsGuiltytoFraudulentlyBillingMedicareover1.1Million.html

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Check out these two excellent buyer beware articles: "Don't Take the Bait: Niche ETFs ..." in *Money* magazine August 2011, and "War and Fleece: Shady financial planners and insurance brokers have found a rich target in America's aging vets" in *Mother Jones* July/August 2011.

Medicare and Medicaid Fraud Systems Lacking

According to a Government Accountability Office report released on July 12, 2011, the federal government's systems for analyzing Medicare and Medicaid data are not where they need be in order to effectively detect potential cases of fraud, waste and abuse.

In 2006, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) initiated activities to centralize and make data more accessible in order to conduct analyses of improper payments identified as fraud, waste and abuse. One of the initiatives was to integrate data related to Medicare and Medicaid Claims into one source of data, and another initiative was to implement a program that conducts complex analyses of the data.

According to the report analyzing CMS's progress, these two systems are in use, but "lack data and functionality essential to CMS's program integrity efforts." The database "does not yet include all the data that were planned to be incorporated by the end of 2010" and specifically does not include any Medicaid data.

The report also states that by fiscal year 2010, 639 analysts were to be trained to use the complex analyses system, but at the end of October 2010, only 42 had been trained.

The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that \$70 billion was lost in improper payments in the Medicare and Medicaid programs in fiscal year 2010.

To read the full report, visit <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d11822t.pdf>

Sources: Milwaukee Journal Sentinel (7/13/11) and GAO's report "Fraud Detection Systems: Additional Actions Needed to Support Program Integrity Efforts at Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services"

Medicare 2012 Trainings for Wisconsin Professionals

To help professionals prepare for the Medicare Enrollment Period, State of Wisconsin SHIP agencies are coordinating two trainings to cover changes to Medicare for 2012: **Medicare Part D for 2012: Overview and Changes and Updates, Medicare Advantage Plans, & Supplements for 2012.** The two separate and free trainings will be held at the same locations on each day, with a break for lunch on your own. You can register for one or both when registration opens in August.

I. Medicare Part D for 2012: Overview and Changes 9:00-12:00 unless noted otherwise

II. Medicare Updates, Medicare Advantage Plans, & Supplements for 2012 1:00-3:30

Certificates for contact hours (not CEUs) will be available for each training separately. You may attend either or both trainings according to your need and schedule.

Medicare for 2012 Training Dates and Locations

Oct. 3rd Rice Lake City Hall, 30 East Eau Claire St.
Rice Lake Rice Lake, WI 54868

Oct. 4th Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center, 3060 South Kinney
Onalaska Coulee Road, Onalaska, WI 54650

Oct. 10th Independence First, 540 South 1st Street, Milwaukee,
Milwaukee WI 53204-1516

Oct. 11th 1 W. Wilson, Room 751, Madison
Madison 8:30-11:30 (Eva Shiffrin with Nate Vercauteren)
1:00-3:30 (Peg Nugent with Vicki Bucholz on Medicare Supplements)
(Both of these sessions will be simultaneously webcast as well as recorded for viewing within a few days afterward. Web viewers will be able to participate in the Q&A on Oct. 11th.)

Oct. 12th Little Theater, North Central Health Care (ADRC entrance)
Wausau 1100 Lake View Drive, Wausau, WI 54403-6799
(This option may coordinate well for I&A or 211 staff who will be travelling to the WisconsinAIRS conference in the Dells on Oct. 13-14th.)

Oct. 17th Central Library 515 Pine St., Green Bay, WI 54301
Green Bay (park at Pine Street Ramp)

Registration forms will be posted on www.gwaar.org and on www.disabilityrightswi.org after August 1, 2011.

SMP & CWAG Activities

Date	Activity	County
July 12-14	SMP Booth - Wisconsin Farm Technology Days-Marshfield	Marathon
July 13-17	SMP Booth - Interstate Fair-West Salem	La Crosse
July 16	SMP Booth-Taste of Rome Event	Adams
July 19	SMP Presentation-Milwaukee Yacht Club	Milwaukee
August 9-11	National SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Conference-Washington DC	
August 22	SMP Presentation-Westby	Vernon
August 25	SMP Volunteer Foundations Training – Madison	Dane
August 30	SMP Booth-Supermarket of Public Benefits	Jefferson
September 21	Presentation-Kelly Senior Center-Cudahy	Milwaukee
September 22	SMP Booth-Hospice End of Life Forum	Dane
October 4	SMP Booth-Beloit Senior Fair	Rock
October 7	Senior Health & Safety Fair-Tomah	Monroe
October 10	Triad Crime Prevention & Safety Expo	Dane
October 11	23 rd Colloquium on Aging Conference & Health & Resource Fair	Dane
October 13-14	Wisconsin AIRS Conference-Kalahari	Sauk
October 28	Rock County Senior Fair-Janesville	Rock
November 11	SMP Presentation-Separated, Divorced, and Widowed Group	Washington

We are always looking for opportunities to support our colleagues in the aging network. Please contact Wisconsin SMP and let us know about your upcoming 2011 activities.

HospiceCare to Offer Two Grief Support Opportunities in August

In August, HospiceCare Inc. will offer a recurring support group and provide an introductory session for those grieving the death of a loved one. Both sessions are open to the public, are provided without charge and are held at the Don & Marilyn Anderson HospiceCare Center, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway, Madison.

- ***Bridges Weekly Support Group*** is held every Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Pre-registration is not required.
- ***Introduction to Grief*** is an informative session for adults that offers suggestions on how to navigate the grieving process and provides information about HospiceCare grief support groups. This session is available by appointment only. Call Mary Severson at (608) 327-7182 to make an appointment.

HospiceCare Question-and-Answer Seminar: “Final Insights: Discovering the Messages of the Dying”

On Tuesday, August 9, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., HospiceCare will offer “Final Insights: Discovering the Messages of the Dying.” Remarks that seem unusual or gestures that seem random may carry real meaning for someone who is at the end of life. Yet it is easy to miss, misunderstand or simply ignore these cues because they seem to make no sense. At this seminar participants will learn to recognize and interpret these statements or gestures that are often missed. The free educational seminar will be held at the Don & Marilyn Anderson HospiceCare Center, 5395 E. Cheryl Parkway, Madison. Pre-registration is requested; please call Carrie Glantz, HospiceCare public affairs, at (608) 327-7202.

Family Caregiver Education Series

Join the Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin to learn about topics of interest to families and friends of those with Alzheimer's or a related dementia. You are welcome to bring your own meal to enjoy during the presentation.

Monday, August 1, 2011

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Hawthorne Library

2707 East Washington Ave., Madison

"Keeping Active: Helping the Person with Dementia Stay Involved." Discover ways to plan for and adapt household routines and to support continued involvement in pleasurable pastimes.

Monday, August 8, 2011

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance

517 N. Segoe Rd., Madison

"Introduction to Alzheimer's and Dementia: Getting Started." Learn about dementia and its warning signs, what to do if you are concerned about yourself or someone you know, and how the ADAW can help.

No registration necessary, just drop in. Donations appreciated. Questions? Call us at 608.232.3400.

FRAUD ALERT – ELECTRONIC VERSION

In previous issues, we told you that Wisconsin SMP *Fraud Alert* will be sent electronically unless we receive a “request for a paper copy” from you.

Contact Patti Wiersma at pwiersma@cwag.org,
giving her your e-mail address,
to add to our list.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Check out the new Wisconsin SMP web site
www.wisconsinsmp.org

You Can also Access Our Publication by visiting our new web site www.wisconsinsmp.org
Or you can visit the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups web site www.cwag.org
Click on Publications then click on Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) and scroll down
and click on the edition you wish to view.

ATTENTION: All of you with E-mail...

In an effort to save paper, postage and be “volunteer friendly,” we will E-mail issues of the *Fraud Alert* to those who have E-mail. Please contact Patti Wiersma at pwiersma@cwag.org, giving her your e-mail address to add to our list. **WE DO SUGGEST THAT YOU PRINT EACH ISSUE AND SAVE IT IN YOUR MEDICARE BINDER FOR FUTURE USE.** Thank you!

For more information, contact:

Elizabeth Conrad, SMP Project Director
Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups Elder Law Center
2850 Dairy Drive – Suite 100
Madison, WI 53718-6742
Phone: 800/488-2596 608/224-0606
E-mail: econrad@cwag.org

