



National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center

Enhancing Consumer Protection for Older Adults by Combating Health Care Fraud

The Problem

Billions of Medicare and Medicaid dollars are lost annually due to billing errors or intentional fraud and abuse of the health care system. Not only are vital tax dollars wasted, but the financial independence and security of older Americans are also threatened. Why? Because they are primary targets of Medicare and Medicaid fraud. Even unintentional billing errors result in losses to Medicare beneficiaries, who are charged excessive co-pays and deductibles as a result. When there is intentional fraud and abuse, however, these financial losses are often compounded by identity theft, the receipt of inappropriate or even detrimental health care services, or the loss of health benefits.

Our Solution

Increasing public awareness about health care fraud – its mechanisms and impact as well as prevention strategies – is essential to combating this pervasive problem in our nation today. Here at the National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center, we do just that, alongside the 54 Senior Medicare Patrol projects we serve and their 5,000 senior volunteers nationwide. Our joint message is **Protect, Detect, Report**. If prevention fails and suspected fraud, error, or abuse is detected, we help the SMP programs take action on behalf of beneficiaries. SMPs report suspected fraud and abuse to the proper authorities, such as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, the Office of the Inspector General's fraud hotline, and local law enforcement.

Background

The National Consumer Protection Technical Resource Center, more commonly called "The SMP Resource Center," is funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health & Human Services, and has existed since 2003.



Center Services

Nationwide Toll-free Number: 877-808-2468

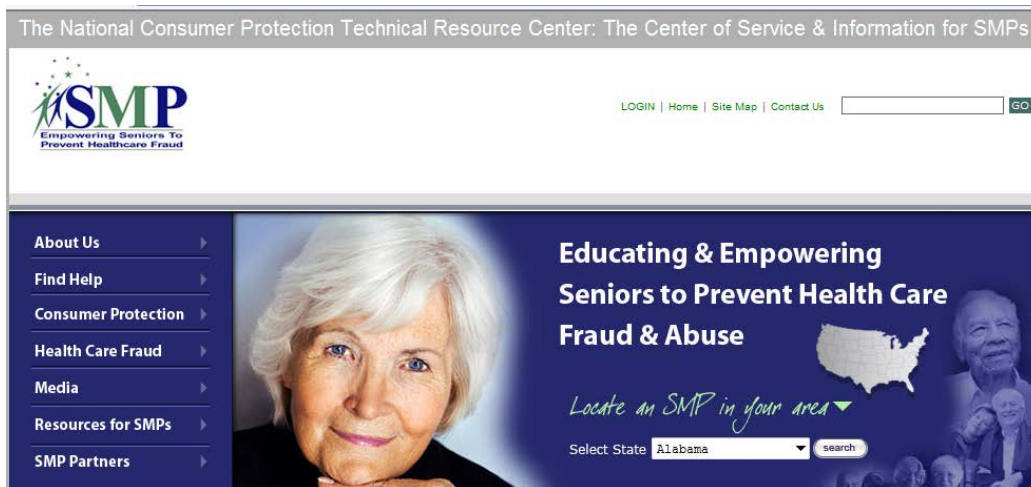
Available Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Eastern Time. Callers receive information about the SMP program and are connected to the SMP in their state if they need individual assistance. This number is published in the *Medicare & You* handbook and other national Medicare and anti-fraud publications that reference the SMP program.

Technical Assistance to SMPs

- Promotes SMP networking and the sharing of best practices
- Provides education and information about health care fraud, error, and abuse
- Develops new products and tools for the national SMP network
- Manages the national SMP outcomes and fraud reporting system
- Forms partnerships with national organizations that can help SMPs achieve their mission

National SMP Website: www.smpresource.org

Our website provides education to the public on health care fraud and consumer protection. Visitors can also find their state's SMP program (see the "Locate an SMP in your area" search tool).



Contact Us

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