

# SMP Spotlight: Partnerships

Each month, the SMP National Resource Center Facebook page spotlights one SMP project or topic. The topic of partnerships was featured in March 2018. Below are the posts, written by SMPs from California, Indiana, New York, Iowa, and New Jersey.

## March 1 – Introduction

SMP National Resource Center

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller. This month’s SMP spotlight is on partnerships. We will hear from several SMP projects on the different ways they utilize Facebook to partner with other agencies, people, and communities.



## March 6 – Indiana

SMP director, Nancy Moore

The partnership and collaboration with WTHR, a local news station, began in 2014 when a physician contacted Bob Segall, an investigative reporter, to advise him of what he was experiencing in the western part of the state. Bob interviewed me for the story, as he investigated the issues with beneficiaries being harassed into agreeing to DME products that they didn’t want or need. The physician was getting numerous faxes for back braces, knee braces, etc. and did a home visit to check on the beneficiary! This led to him contacting WTHR.

Bob Segall from WTHR initiated the contact. Since the first story, I have been intentional about contacting him from time to time and always asking beneficiaries if they’d be willing to talk to a reporter. Luckily, for the latest story, we were able to supply a couple of credible beneficiaries to talk about the back brace/knee brace scam.

SMP programs continue to be the “best kept secret.” Any publicity we can garner will help raise awareness of the program and how we can help beneficiaries, caregivers and the professionals that serve them. Also, DME fraud and abuse, especially of the DME Marketing Guidelines, is rampant, and we need to be proactive about educating the population. Investigative reporters are storytellers, and with our contact of actual fraud victims, together we can tell the story to educate our constituents. WTHR is the news leader here in Central Indiana, and Bob Segall is a well-known, trustworthy reporter.



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## Indiana, continued

Our main goal is to educate beneficiaries, their caregivers and the professionals that serve them about Medicare fraud and abuse. We definitely have widened our net by partnering with a trustworthy news agency. We have definitely accomplished our goal of reaching more beneficiaries, caregivers and professionals that serve them. The last story has thus far generated 87,000 broadcast viewers and 4,950 online viewers. I have received several calls and emails from the story – one of which also fell victim to the back brace/knee brace scam. Physicians have also reached out.

The biggest outcome has been the exposure for the program and the problem of Medicare fraud and abuse. As referenced in the last story's headline, it's affecting not just beneficiaries, but all who pay taxes.



## March 15 – Iowa

SMP Coordinator of Volunteers, Sue Pleggenkuhle

Iowa SMP was invited to join a congressman at his health fairs throughout the state promoting the SMP message. Iowa SMP is given promotional content to post on our Facebook page and then tag his page.

With it being an election year, there will be a lot of opportunities to reach beneficiaries through his speaking engagements.

The partnership was inspired when we were contacted last year in regards to a local event.

We then asked to be notified in the future of the events throughout the state. We are always happy to attend events that we can spread our message to new audiences.

The goal of the event was reaching more people with the SMP message, especially those we have not reached before, which we were successful at. The biggest outcome of having this partnership was attending events in areas we had not before.

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## March 22 – California

SMP director, Micki Nozaki

The Senior & Veteran Fraud Prevention Fair is sponsored by the Shasta County District Attorney's Office in partnership with the Shasta County Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP), one of our valued partners.

The idea for this event came from the DA office after hearing about veteran fraud. California fully embraced the partnership and had a lot of success from it. The SMP received several contacts from the event and the DA office is now fully aware of the SMP program for Medicare fraud referrals when veterans report it.

## March 26 – New York

SMP director, Jenna Gladfelter

The elected officials with whom we've worked were hoping to offer Senior Scam workshops in their respective districts. Their offices arranged the educational sessions at community libraries and senior centers.

I believe all of the elected officials with whom we've worked initially reached out to us. Once word spread that one elected was collaborating with us, neighboring districts began reaching out to us to do the same for theirs.

We were fortunate in that the elected officials that reached out to us were districts with large senior populations and in areas we had yet to touch. We were excited to start these partnerships because elected officials already have a large platform, and we knew this was a great way to push the SMP message out.

Through this partnership, we were also able to equip their district offices to better protect their constituents and raise awareness about the issue of health care fraud.



## New York, continued

Ultimately, we were hoping to gain more program exposure and opportunities to share the SMP message. We were fortunate that this is exactly what happened! Each outreach event opened up another door.

Aside from further statewide exposure, we also had the opportunity to educate elected officials and their staffers. Their constituents come to them for a number of reasons, with all kinds of concerns. Through this partnership, we were also able to equip their district offices to better protect their constituents and raise awareness about the issue of health care fraud.

## March 29 – New Jersey

SMP director, Charles Clarkson



We have all heard about AARP (national) and its reaching out to seniors over the age of 50. I had hoped that I could work with the AARP-NJ to assist the SMP of New Jersey to reach more seniors over the age of 65. I had also attended some of the community events held by AARP-NJ and had a chance to meet with some of their outreach employees.

Over the years I had done a number of presentations for AARP chapters in NJ when they called to ask the SMP of New Jersey to present to them. I hoped that I could reach out to all of the chapters by working with the state AARP.

I was hoping that the state AARP could endorse the SMP program and send out a letter that I prepared to introduce the SMP of

New Jersey to all of the state chapters. My first idea was to invite Julie Marte of the AARP-NJ to join my Advisory Committee since she handled the state's outreach program and I had met her a number of times at her community events. Once she said yes and I had become more acquainted with her, I asked her to assist the SMP of New Jersey to allow SMP to reach out to the state AARP chapters. I knew that without someone on the inside, I would never be able to get approval because they would not share any of the NJ chapters' contact information with me. I wrote a letter about the SMP of New Jersey program and the benefits for the AARP-NJ chapters. I asked her to send it to the state chapters and she agreed. A letter sent by the state AARP was likely to have a greater chance of success.

The biggest outcome was having every NJ chapter receive our letter and many have requested that we do a presentation for them. I could not have reached out to or discovered every chapter on my own. This enabled us to greatly expand our outreach. In addition, most of the AARP-NJ chapter members happen to be over 65 anyway, so it was a perfect fit. Also, with the AARP-NJ representative on our Advisory Committee, we will continue to work together over the years.

