



# SMP SNAPSHOT

The Peach Edition

Georgia Senior Medicare Patrol



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## ***PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM SCAMMERS***

Identity theft is a growing concern in our increasingly interconnected world, and it can manifest through a variety of methods that can catch individuals off guard. Scammers are constantly developing new tactics to gain access to personal information, which they can then exploit for financial gain or other malicious purposes. One common method of identity theft is in-person theft, where an individual might lose their wallet or have it stolen. In such cases, immediate action is essential to mitigate potential damage; contacting your bank and other financial institutions to secure your accounts is a critical first step.

Online scams are another prevalent means through which identity theft occurs. Cybercriminals often impersonate trusted entities, such as banks, government agencies, or popular online services, to trick individuals into providing their personal information. This can happen through phishing emails, deceptive websites, or even social media messages that appear to come from a legitimate source. It's crucial to remain vigilant and skeptical of unsolicited communications that ask for sensitive information. Always check the URL on the sender's address line to verify that the email actually came from the identified source.

Phone solicitations also play a significant role in identity theft schemes. Scammers may call individuals, claiming to be from a reputable organization, and ask for personal details under the guise of updating records or resolving issues. Being aware of these tactics can help you avoid falling victim to such scams.

To protect yourself from identity theft, it's important to carry only essential items in your wallet. A photo ID, debit card, and a list of emergency contacts are practical to have on hand. However, sensitive documents like your Social Security card should be stored securely at home to minimize the risk of loss or theft.

Maintaining online security is equally vital in today's digital landscape. Using strong, unique passwords for different accounts can significantly reduce the

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## PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM SCAMMERS, cont.

risk of unauthorized access. Additionally, enabling two-factor authentication adds an extra layer of protection, making it more challenging for scammers to compromise your accounts. Regularly updating your software and devices helps to safeguard against hacking attempts, as many security vulnerabilities are addressed through these updates.

Medical identity theft is particularly alarming, as it involves the misuse of an individual's healthcare information. Scammers can exploit this information to access medical services, prescription drugs, or even insurance benefits, potentially impacting the victim's health records and financial status. Being proactive in monitoring your health records and reporting any suspicious activity can help to protect against this type of fraud.

If you suspect that your identity has been compromised or notice any suspicious activity, it is imperative to report it to the relevant authorities promptly. Organizations such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) provide valuable resources and guidance on how to protect your identity and what steps to take if you believe you've been targeted by identity theft. If you suspect that you are at risk or may have been the victim of Medicare fraud, report it to SMP immediately. You can call us toll-free at 877-272-8720 or visit our website, [www.stopmedicarefraud.org](http://www.stopmedicarefraud.org).

In summary, awareness and vigilance are key in the fight against identity theft. By understanding the various methods scammers use and taking proactive measures to safeguard your personal information, you can significantly reduce your risk of falling victim to this crime.

Written with the help of Lynn Rosenblatt, RN (retired) & SMP Volunteer

### THE MEDICARE SCAMMER SLAMMER



A doctor who practiced in **Ringgold, Georgia** has settled claims under the False Claims Act to resolve allegations that they knowingly submitted false claims to Medicare for medically unnecessary therapy. They have been ordered to pay \$700,000 in restitution to Medicare for submitting false claims.

[Read the DOJ Press Release Here](#)

SAVE THE DATE

Webinar Wednesdays w/ SMP:

**April 30th at 10:30CT/11:30ET - Genetic Testing Scams**

**May 28th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Virtual Healthcare Scams**

**June 25th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Volunteering for SMP**

877-272-8720



**SMP**  
Senior Medicare Patrol  
Preventing Medicare Fraud

**ADVISEWELL**

This project in Georgia is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$806,420.00 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the US Government.