



SMP SPOTLIGHT

MISSISSIPPI SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL



IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

HEALTHY MS 2025
PAGE 01

BOOTS ON THE GROUND
PAGE 02

SMP ON THE MOVE
PAGE 02

UPCOMING EVENTS
PAGE 02

HEALTHY MISSISSIPPI 2025

MS SMP had the opportunity and privilege to be a proud sponsor of the 2025 Healthy MS Conference hosted by MS State Department of Health and MS Health Disparities organization at the Refuge Sheraton in Flowood MS. This event was a 3-day conference packed with education and information on Mississippi's need for innovative solutions and strategies on how to improve health equity, wellness, educational resource availability, access to care, and nutrition in hopes to minimize the known disparity in high-need areas throughout the state.



Both Danielle Guillory and Danae Brown, MS Community Outreach Specialists, were able to share SMP's educational information at their booth as an exhibitor. They conducted a presentation at the "Healthy Aging" break-out session on Day 2 of the conference. The presentation introduced Senior Medicare Patrol, our mission, and information on why the aging population are targeted by scammers along with a host of research that supports our purpose thereby emphasizing the great need for outreach and education on Medicare fraud, errors, abuse prevention and reporting. After all, health is wealth, but knowledge on protecting one's health identity is a wealth saver.



BOOTS ON THE GROUND

We are in the 2nd Quarter of 2025. In reflection, we can say it has truly been an eventful and fruitful time. Mississippi SMP's calendar has been filled with back-to-back events and group education sessions. Giving a little background: when the world opened back up after COVID-19 struck, all the opportunities to connect with the community, especially our rural and underserved areas, were severely diminished to near non-existent truly out of a warranted fear. There were times when we did not think that we would ever see groups gathering for any reason, much less at a health fair, conference, or group education session. But, by staying the course and finding other ways to reach our communities like post cards, podcasts on YouTube, and producing educational materials, our organization survived the barriers that once separated us. We have resiliently evolved into a more health-cognizant force, driven by the enthusiasm and eagerness to connect and form partnerships, expanding our educational outreach in bigger, better, and more innovative ways, to make up for lost time and serve our Medicare beneficiaries, their family members, and caregivers and strengthen their fight against healthcare scams.

If we have learned anything, we have learned that there are people who solve problems for a vulnerable population and there are people capitalizing on the vulnerable population creating problems. Problem solving is what Medicare Fraud prevention is all about and why we are "boots on the ground" in the community and forming partnerships to multiply our efforts. Connection is key!

MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION WEEK 2025

During the week of June 2nd through June 6th, Senior Medicare Patrol held Medicare Fraud Prevention Week celebration activities at three nutrition sites in North Mississippi: Greenwood Multi-Purpose Center, Winona Community Center, and the Lewis Johnson Senior Citizen. The seniors at the Lewis Johnson Senior Citizen in Grenada had a program inviting their community to join them in this celebration and the Grenada mayor's office issued a proclamation. The seniors put on 3 amazing stage plays about fraud, read poetry, had line dancing, played bingo, and our Community Outreach Specialist, Jeanette Ringo, conducted an education outreach session for Medicare Fraud Prevention Week. Attendees had a great time!



WEBINAR WEDNESDAYS WITH SMP

July 30th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Fraud
August 27th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Prescription Drug Fraud & Scams
September 24th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Open Enrollment Scams

(click on links to register)

877-272-8720



This project in Mississippi 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 \$538,619.00 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.



Dear SMP:

My husband received a package by mail with dozens of urinary catheters. He doesn't use them, and we were unsure who ordered them. We tried to contact the sender, but there was no shipping invoice and the company was not listed on the internet. A month later, there was a charge on his Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) from a physician we have never heard of. It was for a substantial amount of money, and Medicare paid the claim. His supplement was also billed the 20% co-pay. What do we do now?



Amy

Dear Amy,

It sounds like your husband has been the victim of a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) scam, and you should contact the [Senior Medicare Patrol](#) to report it.

Each year, Medicare payments for Durable Medical Equipment (DME) like wheelchairs, prosthetic and orthotic devices including back braces and other medical supplies, top more than \$7 billion in traditional Medicare alone. Recent cases demonstrate that DME continues to be a target of fraudulent billing and that new schemes have developed.

DME devices used in patients homes, such as manual wheelchairs, walkers, oxygen supplies, blood glucose monitors and test strips, urinary catheters and collection devices, and devices to treat sleep apnea, are among a huge variety of possibilities for fraud and scams. Specialty items such as prosthetic limbs for amputees and orthotic devices such as shoe inserts and back/knee braces are also common to fraudulent billing in terms of medical necessity of what is supplied and what is billed.

Motorized wheelchairs/scooters are commonly advertised as Medicare-payable, but that is not always the case. A doctor must submit a written order confirming that you have a medical need for the device for use in your home environment. You must have a health condition that causes significant difficulty with mobility. There will likely be a home assessment to ensure the living environment can accommodate the wheelchair, and that it is truly needed for mobility within the home. Pre-authorization may also be required. Generally, a motorized device for convenience outside of the home is not covered.

The golden rule of Medicare is **medical necessity**. A DME claim is a request for payment submitted to Medicare for medical equipment and supplies ordered by a Medicare-enrolled physician or treating practitioner for use in a patient's home. This equipment must be medically necessary, withstand repeated use, and primarily serve a medical purpose for use in the home.



Scammers are targeting Medicare enrollees through phone calls, the internet, magazine ads, and now even through text messages, with offers of “free services”, medical equipment, or gift cards upon confirming their personal information and eligibility for specific Medicare services. Often, the enticement for the individual is that they are “qualified” for items “at no cost” or “free”.

In your husband’s case, the DME was urinary catheters which were sent from a company who had, in some manner, obtained your husband’s Medicare number. The DME company had obtained it’s own authorizing provider, who does not know or have a relationship with your husband, to sign an authorization for the catheters. The authorization was a prescription for DME products that have no medical necessity, and/or are totally unnecessary for your husband’s use or medical condition. The product is shipped and billed. Medicare pays, as does a supplement policy, and you are left with products that you never ordered or needed.

Be suspicious of anyone who offers free medical equipment and then requests your Medicare number. No one other than your provider’s office should ever request your Medicare information. There is no other circumstance when it is appropriate or safe to provide it. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.

If medical equipment is delivered to you, don’t accept it unless it is ordered by your physician. If possible, refuse the delivery or return it to the sender. Keep a record of the sender’s name and the date you returned the items. Review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) that you receive. Scan it for any claims for supplies that you did not order.

If you believe you have been a victim of a DME scam or other scam, please report it to SMP at 877-272-8720 or you can visit www.stopmedicarefraud.org for more information.

Lynn Rosenblatt, RN (retired) & SMP Volunteer



Do you have a Medicare fraud or scam question for SMP?
If so, please email **ASK SMP** to smp@advisewell.org



Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) are grant funded projects of the US Department of Health & Human Services and the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Every state has an SMP program. In Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Vermont, SMP is sponsored by AdviseWell, Inc.

Our mission is to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.



Webinar Wednesdays w/ SMP:

July 30th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Fraud

August 27th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Prescription Drug Fraud & Scams

September 24th 10:30CT/11:30ET - Open Enrollment Scams

Click on links above to register.

