



Nebraska SHIP/SMP Warns Rising Medicare Scammers

LINCOLN (JULY 24, 2023): Nebraska's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) warn about rising cases of Medicare fraud in the state. The recent cases of fraud focus on Covid-19 testing kits.

Type of Scams

With the end of the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency, testing kits were no longer available for free after May 11, 2023. Scammers began to take advantage of Medicare recipients by sending at-home Covid-19 testing kits and then billing them. Many recipients did not request the kits from their doctors.

Medicare recipients informed Nebraska SHIP/SMP that their Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) showed billing for the tests. Some recipients saw invoices dated back to October and November of last year.

How to Protect from Scams

SHIP/SMP Administrator Jonathan Burlison spoke on how these scammers try to learn Medicare recipients' personal information so that they can bill Medicare for products like testing kits.

"Nebraskans report that when receiving these tests, there is document requesting personal identifying information with directions to mail it back," Burlison said. "While other recipients report that they are getting phone calls from individuals claiming to be Medicare employees stating they simply need to confirm their Medicare number or other information to get these tests or other items.

Burlison also indicated how Medicare recipients and their families can look for any signs of fraud.

"These scammers are savvy and will sometimes already know some information about the person," Burlison said. "We're starting to see scammers bill for these items in the past, perhaps to help cover up the billing."

"If you see suspicious activity, such as billing for at-home Covid-19 tests or other items or services you didn't receive," Burlison said. "You should report it immediately to Nebraska SHIP/SMP."

Medicare allows claims to be submitted up to 12 months after receiving a receipt for an item or service. Nebraska SHIP/SMP can help determine if a new Medicare number needs to be administered and will assist with making a request for the number from Medicare.

Who to Contact:

Nebraska's State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to make informed Medicare decisions and prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse, warns about rising signs of scammers going after Medicare recipients.

If you suspect you or a loved one is a victim of Medicare fraud or abuse, please get in touch with the Nebraska SHIP/SMP team at (800) 234-7119 or visit a local SHIP/SMP office. People can find SHIP/SMP offices in Lincoln, Scottsbluff, Norfolk, Grand Island, Kearney, Omaha, North Platte, and a remote location in Tekamah.

To learn more about SHIP/SMP and Medicare fraud, please visit the SHIP/SMP website at doi.nebraska.gov/consumer/senior-health.