

If you're on Medicare, you can help stop fraud!

Let's face it, fraud costs Medicare an estimated \$60 billion each year and ultimately raises the cost of healthcare for everyone. The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is bringing awareness to this issue during National Medicare Fraud Prevention Week, June 3-9.

SMPs around the country 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. SMPs are grant-funded projects of the federal U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Administration for Community Living.

As a Medicare beneficiary, you can do your part to protect yourself by following these fraud tips:

- Make sure you buy from a licensed agent. To see if they're licensed in Washington state go to www.insurance.wa.gov.
- Never give out your personal information such as your Social Security, bank account or credit-card numbers over the phone unless you've initiated the contact.
- Keep your receipts and bills and compare them to your Medicare Summary Notice to be sure you received all the services, supplies, or equipment listed.
- Don't share your Medicare number with anyone who contacts you by phone, email or in person - unless you've given them advanced permission. Medicare will never contact you for your Medicare number or other personal information.
- Be careful of any salesperson who says he or she is from Medicare. Medicare does not send salespeople to solicit your business.

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) program is Washington state's SMP project. For 45 years, SHIBA's been providing free unbiased Medicare help through the Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner. SHIBA can help you prevent, detect and report Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse. If you have questions or suspect fraud or abuse, call us at 1-800-562-6900 or visit www.insurance.wa.gov/medicare.