



STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
**Aging & Long-Term Services**  
**Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham**  
Katrina Hotrum-Lopez, Cabinet Secretary  
Sam Ojinaga, Deputy Cabinet Secretary  
Buffie Saavedra, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 14, 2020

### **Beware of Fraud Schemes Associated with COVID-19**

**NEW MEXICO**-As awareness about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic grows, so do the scams associated with it. Scammers use public health emergencies as opportunities for new fraud schemes, and because older adults are at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19, they often target these more vulnerable populations. Common attempts include scammers using false assertions to gain an individual's personal information in order to charge federal programs or insurance plans for procedures or testing and pocketing the funds, or simply using fear surrounding the pandemic as a way to obtain sensitive information in order to steal an identity for other nefarious purposes.

"Given there is currently no FDA approved vaccine at this time, it is important to be very discerning about any calls or solicitations you receive in which individuals offer COVID-19 interventions or treatments, or seek personal medical or financial information. Scammers often use fear-based tactics to convince people that a vaccine or cure is available, as a lure to acquire confidential information," said Samantha Morales, Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Director.

It's also important to remember that although the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health officials may contact you if they believe you may have been exposed to the virus, they will not ask you for insurance or financial information.

SMP provides the following guidance for Medicare beneficiaries to follow:

- Contact your own doctor if you are experiencing potential symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do not give out your Medicare number, Social Security number, or personal information in response to unsolicited calls, texts, emails, home visits, or booths at health fairs and other public venues. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes as well.

*Partners in Lifelong Independence and Healthy Aging*  
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- Be suspicious of anyone going door-to-door to offer free coronavirus or COVID-19 testing, supplies, or treatments.
- Carefully review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for errors or claims for products or services that weren't received.
- Follow the instructions of the state or your local government for other actions you should be taking in response to COVID-19.
- If you have any questions or concerns relating to potential scams, contact your local SMP for help. SMPs empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse.

The SMP can provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; DETECT potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and REPORT your concerns. SMPs help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. To contact the state Senior Medicare Patrol, contact the New Mexico Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) at 1-800-432-2080.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)  
New Mexico Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)  
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