



Preventing Medicare Fraud

ND SMP Scam of the Month – July 2023

Warning! Watch out for COVID test kits you didn't order!

Some Medicare beneficiaries are receiving COVID test kits (sometimes by the dozen) in their mail that they never requested. Others are reporting they are not getting the test kits but see the charges on their Medicare statements. This is a sign that scammers may be using a beneficiary's Medicare number to falsely bill Medicare. Frauds like the COVID testing scam and other billing mistakes cost Medicare an estimated \$60 billion each year.

In April 2022, Medicare agreed to pay for eight COVID-19 tests per month for those with Medicare Part B. When the public health emergency ended on May 11, Medicare stopped paying for the over-the-counter COVID test kits. Medicare continues to pay for COVID testing provided in a clinic or a doctor's office and processed in a lab. Some Medicare Advantage plans may still pay for at-home tests. Contact your plan for more information.

How to prevent being a victim of Medicare fraud:

- Never give anyone your Medicare number over the phone.
 - Protect it like you would a credit card.
 - Callers who offer "free supplies or lab tests", or say you need a new Medicare card are scammers. They are trying to get your Medicare number.
 - **Remember, the real Medicare will never ask you for your number...they already have it!!**
- Review your Medicare statements.
 - When you read your statement, look for services (like COVID test kits) or equipment Medicare paid for, but you didn't get.
 - Check if the statements show double charges for services or equipment, or things you didn't ask for.
- If you see a charge that you think may be Medicare fraud, call your medical provider or insurance plan and ask them to explain the charges. If you are not satisfied with the response, contact ND SMP or call Medicare at 1-800-633-4227.

Reporting Medicare fraud: If you think you have spotted fraud, report it right away. ND SMP will help seniors prevent, detect and report Medicare fraud. If you see anything suspicious, contact the ND SMP at ndsmp@minotstateu.edu or call 1-833-818-0029. For non-Medicare fraud issues, contact the ND Attorney General's Office at 1-800-472-2600.

The information provided is intended to be a general summary only. Source of information: Small, B. (8 June 20). *Federal Trade Commission Consumer Advice*. Medicare fraud prevention: What's on your statement?

North Dakota Senior Medicare Patrol Phone: 833-818-0029 or (701) 858-3580

For more information or to locate your SMP, visit <https://ndcpd.org/smp/>

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