

Genetic Testing Awareness

We would like the SHIP and SMP networks to be informed that representatives from genetic testing companies, or possibly insurance agents working on behalf of these companies, may ask to participate in a beneficiary event. For the protection of our beneficiaries, we advise SHIPs and SMPs to decline these requests because of the potential for fraud. CMS has received inquiries from beneficiaries stating that they have been billed for genetic testing or cancer screenings performed at community events and senior centers. The SHIPs and SMPs can help us spread the following messages to clients.

- Do not give out your Medicare number or Social Security number. Be cautious of unsolicited requests for your Medicare or Social Security numbers. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.
- Do not consent to any lab tests at senior centers, health fairs, or in your home. Be suspicious of anyone claiming that genetic tests and cancer screenings are at no cost to you.
- Genetic tests and cancer screenings must be medically necessary and ordered by your doctor to be covered by Medicare. Random genetic testing and cancer screenings aren't covered by Medicare. If you are interested in the test, speak with your doctor.
- Monitor your Medicare Summary Notice to see if there are any services you didn't have or didn't want but were billed for. Medicare Summary Notices are sent every three months if you get any services or medical supplies during that 3-month period.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE or 1-800-HHS-TIPS if you think you're a victim of fraud.

SHIPs and SMPs should also be advised that calling 1-800-MEDICARE is probably the most efficient way to address any claims that may have been submitted. CMS staff will work directly with the MACs so that they can determine whether the claim(s) should be reversed and an overpayment should be requested from the provider.

You can contact a SHIP or Senior Medicare Patrol staff member at the Council on Aging at 406-363-5690