

SMP MONTHLY

ISSUE NO. 36 | JAN 2023 |



REMINDERS



Join us for the
SMP Volunteer Meeting
on **January 20 at 11:00 AM.**
Outreach Counselor Leslie
Sierra will be presenting.

- To join by computer
Click [HERE](#)
- To join by phone dial
646-558-8656, Meeting
ID: 533 682 2516

Hello,

This January marks the start of a new year and opportunities for a fresh start. We'd love to hear from you to find out how we can start the year off right and what you want to accomplish in 2023 as an SMP volunteer. Just take a few minutes to fill out the volunteer survey [HERE](#).

Highlights this month:

- We will continue with our virtual volunteer meetings on the 3rd Friday of the month at 11:00 AM.
- Our next volunteer meeting will be on JAN 20 and Outreach Counselor Leslie Sierra will be presenting on how to protect yourself from online scams.
- The Medicare Card Scam is back again and page 2 of our newsletter reviews types of cards that scammers use as a way to steal your Medicare number. Also, find out why Medicare may be contacting you via mail.
- Meet our new SMP DEI Coordinator Dawn Copper-Nieves. Dawn will be at our January meeting, so please stop in and say "hi".



We are very excited to kick off 2023 with all of you! Looking forward to seeing you at our meeting on the 20th.

- NY StateWide Senior Action Council Staff

As you check in with loved ones this year, take a few moments to inquire about the following:



- Unopened Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs)
- Unopened medical bills
- Unnecessary medical equipment in the home
- Unopened bills or letters from creditors
- Mailings soliciting donations or giveaways or thank you notes for donations

If you find issues that may be potential fraud, contact our SMP counselors with questions **800-333-4374**. They can help.

Medicare Fraud Helpline 800-333-4374

Medicare Card Scams & Data Breach Alert

In the past, Medicare beneficiaries used their Social Security number as their Medicare number.

In 2018, as a result of some changes instituted by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) each Medicare beneficiary received a new card with a uniquely assigned combination of letters & numbers. This was done to help keep beneficiaries' identity and Social Security numbers secure.

Currently, fraudsters are still calling beneficiaries falsely claiming that Medicare is issuing new Medicare cards for different reasons. What is important to know is that **Medicare will not call beneficiaries to offer them new Medicare cards and request that they confirm their Medicare number.**

Some examples of what scammers are offering are:

- Plastic Medicare Card
- Plastic Medicare Card with a chip in it
- Medicare Card with Covid-19 vaccination
- Medicare Card that is black and white
- Medicare Card with Primary Doctor's name on it

[Please share this flyer](#) with others in your community and tell them to call our Helpline if they may be a victim of a Medicare card scam.

MEDICARE CARD DATA BREACH ALERT



Up to 254,000 Medicare beneficiaries' personal information may have been compromised in an online ransomware attack at a government subcontractor. (12/16/2022)

- Beneficiaries whose personal information may have been compromised should receive a letter from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services about the data breach.
- Those impacted will be issued new Medicare cards and ID numbers in the coming weeks.



Meet Dawn Copper-Nieves, Coordinator of the SMP Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity Program

Dawn has decades of experience in the healthcare field. Her career began as a medical assistant where she had hands-on experience

working with older adults in primary care. It was at that time that Dawn decided to return to college and received a BS degree in Community Health Education. Upon returning to work in the healthcare field as a medical office administrator Dawn worked closely with patients advocating for their care and services. She realized that her ability to advocate successfully for people was her calling and Dawn became a Certified Health Education Specialist in 2011.

In the last several years Dawn has used her skills, knowledge and commitment to older adults to educate and develop programming focused on health promotion, disease prevention, understanding medical benefits and the right to access care.

- *Joined the Senior Medicare Patrol 12/2022*



LONG ISLAND DOCTOR SENTENCED FOR MEDICARE BILLING SCHEME



Gastroenterologist Morris Barnard from Great Neck, NY was sentenced to 30 months in prison for health care fraud and ordered to pay over \$1.4 million in restitution to Medicare. Barnard

submitted over \$3 million in billings to Medicare for colonoscopy and gastroenterological procedures that were not performed. Most of these billings indicated that the services were rendered to disabled beneficiaries who were living in residential group homes. See the full DOJ press release [HERE](#)

(source: smpresource.org, 1/9/2023)

STATE WIDE

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