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**EXECUTIVE OFFICE ON AGING, SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL
HAWAI'I SPREAD AWARENESS FOR MEDICARE FRAUD
PREVENTION WEEK**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HONOLULU — Medicare loses an estimated \$60 billion per year to false claims. Learn how to stay safe by joining Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Hawai'i for Medicare Fraud Prevention Week, June 3-9.

SMP Hawai'i, a program of the Executive Office on Aging (EOA), is offering a free webinar via Zoom on Saturday, June 8 from 10-11 a.m. The public is invited to the webinar, which will focus on Medicare fraud, the latest scams, and how to volunteer for SMP Hawai'i.

"Medicare fraud has a devastating impact on older adults as well as the Medicare program," said SMP Hawai'i Director Norma Kop. "We teach kūpuna how to prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse. Our counselors help individuals who suspect that their Medicare number has been lost or stolen and used to file false claims."

Request a free "My Health Care Tracker" booklet from SMP to track health services before paying. The booklet can help you:

- Log doctor visits, lab tests, X-rays, hospital stays, prescription drugs, supplies, and other health services, then use to cross check with billing statements for accuracy.
- Only pay for services or supplies that your doctor ordered, and you received.

- Find out if someone has stolen your Medicare number and is sending claims to Medicare for services or supplies fraudulently using your identity and Medicare number.

"During this special week, we're excited to inform our community on how to detect Medicare fraud as well as the other services we offer," Kop said. "It takes our entire state to protect kūpuna, as Hawai'i continues to lead the nation in average life expectancy. Being proactive and volunteering with SMP builds a stronger safety net of support for our loved ones and kūpuna who are most vulnerable and need to protect their identity, assets, and legacy."

Call 1-800-296-9422 or email info@smphawaii.org to register for the June 8 webinar or submit a request through www.smphawaii.org.

Everyone plays a part in the fight against fraud:

Medicare beneficiaries can monitor their insurance statements to make sure products and services received match what they are being billed before they pay.

Caregivers should take notice of items such as knee braces or other durable medical equipment which was sent to the beneficiary without their doctor's prescription. Remind loved ones to never give out their Medicare number or personal information.

Families can talk to loved ones about protecting their Medicare number just as they would a credit card number. They can help to create a Medicare.gov account to access Medicare statements online or review the mailed statement. They can also register their phone number on the "do not call" directory and stop mailings through optoutprescreen.com.

Partners and professionals can share prevention tips with clients and request a free presentation from SMP Hawai'i to hear about the latest scams and to learn more.

Health care providers can talk to patients about common health care-related scams such as durable medical equipment (DME) and genetic testing schemes. Remind clients that products and services should only be ordered by their physician, and to never order items through unsolicited calls.

Community members can help by looking out for older neighbors and friends. When in the public, take special notice if older individuals are purchasing many gift cards in large denominations. Encourage others to talk to a trusted source to get Medicare answers and to spread the word about scams. Lastly, volunteer today with SMP Hawai'i.

SMP Hawai'i is ready to provide information to protect, detect, and report fraud, errors, and abuse. The organization educates and empowers Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud.

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