



For Week Ending March 1, 2013

Counselor and Coordinator Announcements:

1. Granny Goes Undercover:

An elderly woman recently went undercover to investigate fraud for ABC news. She is 82 years old and she took a hidden camera and entered a doctor's office as a patient in McAllen, Texas where there are many people in the medical profession suspected of getting rich. Watch this video to see how Medicare was worked. Just to let you know that this is not all doom and gloom, the OIG accepted this case for prosecution.

<http://abcnews.go.com/Nightline/video/granny-catches-medicare-fraud-tape-15830592>

2. Scooter Store:

The Scooter Store headquarters in New Braunfels, Texas, was raided by the FBI, the OIG, and the Texas State Attorney General on February 20. They are accused of ripping off Medicare for hundreds of millions of dollars a year. They allegedly hound physicians to get them to write prescriptions and create a false medical necessity for people to justify the sale of their scooters. One person was quoted that they "Bulldoze [physicians] and get them to get the paperwork done." For more information, you can refer to these web sites:

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505266_162-57570450/the-scooter-store-power-wheelchair-company-raided-in-federal-probe/

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/02/22/172708345/fbi-raids-the-scooter-store-will-tsa-crack-down-on-wheelchair-miracles>

<http://now.msn.com/fbi-raids-the-scooter-store-headquarters>

3. Unsolicited Phone Calls to Beneficiaries:

The SMP Hotline has received multiple calls from Medicare beneficiaries that they are receiving unsolicited phone calls from a Texas phone number, 402-574-1214. The caller greets the beneficiary by their first name, and knows the beneficiary's name, address, phone number and the first four digits of their bank routing number. The caller notifies the beneficiary that they are from Medicare and that Medicare is issuing them a new Medicare card in preparation for the upcoming implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In order to get the new card, the beneficiary must provide the caller with their bank routing number. Fortunately, beneficiaries who have reported this scam to SMP have, so far, not become victims to this scheme. They have been astute enough to identify the scam and hang up. However, they are also concerned with the amount of personal information that the caller has on record regarding them and call SMP to report the incident.

If you have situations involving this scheme, have the beneficiary call the Colorado SMP Hotline, 1-800-503-5190. The beneficiaries that call 1-800 Medicare are being told to call the Colorado SMP Hotline number, 1-800-503-5190 to report the issue. Other suggestions to offer them, especially if they have released private information are:

1. Report the information to the Federal Trade Commission, FTC on their website. File a formal complaint at www.ftc.gov. (note that once the report is filed, the beneficiary will not receive feedback from FTC).
2. Contact the local sheriff or police department to report the incident.

3. Have the beneficiary place their phone number on the no-call phone list.
4. Report the incident to their bank and notify them of the possible scheme. The bank will be able to flag their account for questionable transactions.

4. Part D Scam:

The Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of the Elderly (CARIE) and the Pennsylvania Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) have informed us that an old scam is making its way around again. Please alert your Medicare beneficiary contacts about a prescription drug phone scam where the scammer offers a new prescription drug plan for the low price of \$299 per year, then asks for checking account information and a Social Security number. The caller may actually deduct \$299 from a victim's checking account but the drug plan does not exist.

Please remind people that Medicare never solicits personal information from beneficiaries, and no one will lose coverage for not signing up for a Part D plan. Advise them to hang up the phone if they get a call like this!

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2013/02/25/blog-medicare-part-d-prescription-scam-pops-up-again/>

5. **Bitter Pill:** Time Magazine recently ran an article by Steve Brill: *Bitter Pill: Why Medical Bills Are Killing Us*. The article is catching the attention of many people. It is written using examples of medical billing situations and why the same services in hospitals result in drastically different patient liabilities. (Warning: If you start reading this, you will not want to put it down.) Of particular interest to you may be the contrast with Medicare's pricing practices. If you do not subscribe to "Time," you can find the article on the web at <http://healthland.time.com/2013/02/20/bitter-pill-why-medical-bills-are-killing-us/>

6. **Novitis Part A and B Contractor:**

Just a reminder – Novitis became the Parts A and B contractor for Medicare claims processing this fall. The identity of the contractor matters, for instance, when you are submitting an appeal for a denial. Bookmark the following link to stay current on the Medicare contractors for A, B, DME, Home Health, and Hospice claims: <http://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Monitoring-Programs/Provider-Compliance-Interactive-Map/index.html#co>

7. Connect for Health Assistance Network funding opportunity open until April 8: For those of you who are or know of community partners who might be interested in becoming an assistance site, a regional assistance hub, and/or a SHOP assistance site (small group employer plans), the funding opportunity has been posted at the Exchange website: <http://www.getcoveredco.org/About-Us/Assistance-Network/Funding-Opportunity>

8. Long term and chronic conditions services case settlement approved: Thanks to Patty Daniells for forwarding the following link to an article from the Medicare Advocacy Organization about the practice of employing an “improvement” standard for receipt of care. You can read the article at <http://www.medicareadvocacy.org/2013/01/24/judge-approves-settlement-in-jimmo-vs-sebelius-after-court-hearing/>

9. Health Insurance Market reforms final rule published: If you want to know more about the latest batch of Affordable Care Act provisions that will impact single and group health insurance, see <http://cciio.cms.gov/resources/factsheets/marketreforms-2-22-2013.html>. This is quick summary and good information to be able to direct consumers to when inquiries arise regarding changes coming in 2014.

Thanks to Greg Watson and Ed Mendicello for helping produce this issue of the Updates!

Alice Ierley
SHIP and SMP Program Director
Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies
Division of Insurance
1560 Broadway, Suite 850
Denver, CO 80202
P 303-894-7552 F 303-869-0151
alice.ierley@state.co.us

