

FRAUD ALERT



Friday February 17, 2012

Please share this Fraud Alert with colleagues, consumers, or other professionals in your area. If you have any questions about the Illinois SMP program, or to receive these Fraud Alerts directly, please contact Erin Weir, Healthcare Consumer Protection Coordinator at AgeOptions.

This project was supported in part by grant numbers 90MP0026 and 90MP0127 from the U.S. Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration on Aging policy.

Fraud In The News

The following are current news articles about health care and fraud issues.

Health Care Fraud:

1. "Obama Administration's Unprecedented Fraud Fighting Pays Off" (White House Blog that mentions SMP):
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2012/02/14/obama-administration-s-unprecedented-fraud-fighting-pays>

Dear SMP readers,

This week's Fraud Alert contains warnings about a telemarketing scam offering people money for being "felony free," a tax fraud scam, and a potential home delivered meal scam.

Have a great weekend!

What you will find in this week's Fraud Alert

- Watch Out for the "Felony Free" Scam
- CMS Warning About Tax Fraud and Identity Theft
- Potential Scammer Claims to Be Delivering Home Delivered Meals

Watch Out For the "Felony Free" Scam

Illinois SMP Coordinator Erin Weir was a guest on the U.S. Postal Inspection Service radio show "Don't Fall For It" this week, discussing health care fraud in Illinois. During the show, U.S. Postal Inspector in Charge Tom Brady warned the show's listeners about a new telemarketing scam called the "felony free" scam. In this scam, a caller says that s/he is calling from the federal government to offer the person thousands of dollars for being "felony free." The caller then asks for bank account/credit card information in order to deposit the money.

This probably goes without saying, but the federal government is NOT giving out money to people who have not committed felonies – this is simply another ploy to obtain personal information and steal from people. Another good reason to remind everyone you know to NEVER give out any personal information to anyone who calls on the phone for any reason!

CMS Warning About Tax Fraud and Identity Theft

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued a warning this week about a scam in which Medicare beneficiaries' identities are being stolen and used to submit fraudulent tax returns. It appears that individuals' information (name, Social Security number, address, and date of birth) is being obtained from employers, schools, hospitals, and prisons. This information is then used to electronically file a tax return in the person's name, and the tax refund is loaded onto a Green Dot prepaid debit card. The victims generally do not realize that

2. "Illinois Taking Initiative on [Medicaid] Fraud" (Peoria Journal Star):
<http://www.pjstar.com/free/x962226928/Illinois-taking-the-initiative-on-Medicare-fraud>

Consumer Fraud:

3. "AARP Scam Alert: You've Won A Million Bucks!":
<http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-02-2012/publishers-clearing-house-sweepstakes-scam-alert.html?cmp=NLC-RSS-DAILY-BULLETIN>
4. "AARP Scam Alert: Faux Faxes":
<http://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-02-2012/faux-faxes-scam-alert.html?cmp=NLC-RSS-DAILY-BULLETIN>

their information has been stolen until they try to file their tax return.

If anyone believes they have been a victim of this scam, call the Illinois SMP program at AgeOptions: (800)699-9043. We can help consumers get in contact with the proper authorities to report it.

Potential Scammer Claims to be Delivering Home Delivered Meals

A home delivered meal provider in the northern Chicago area reported the following incident this week:

One of this agency's home delivered meal clients answered a buzz at the front door of her condominium building at 8 a.m. The person at the door told the woman that he was there to deliver her home delivered meal. The woman buzzed the person up, but no one ever arrived at her condo door. When she contacted the home delivered meal agency to find out what happened, they informed her that they never come that early, and that this man was not from their agency.

We are not sure who this man was, or what he was trying to do, but what is clear is that he was likely using the guise of delivering home delivered meals as a way to obtain entry into the building for some other purpose. We encourage home delivered meal providers and other agencies who provide in-home services to make clients aware of the protocols for those visits, and what the clients can expect from actual agency staff, in order to prevent clients from being taken advantage of by a scammer who claims to be from your agency. We hear numerous reports of telemarketing and door-to-door scams in which the scammer(s) claim to represent a respected local agency, so it is important to educate clients on how they can distinguish a scammer from an actual agency representative.



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AgeOptions, the Area Agency on Aging of Suburban Cook County, is committed to improving the quality of life and maintaining the dignity of older adults and those who care about them – through leadership and support, community partnerships, comprehensive services, accurate information and powerful advocacy.

Fraud Alerts contain information about current scams taking place in Illinois, announcements and updates about programs or services related to health care and/or fraud protection, and links to news articles about health care and fraud topics. Please forward any recommendations or announcements that you would like to be included in a future Fraud Alert to erin.weir@ageoptions.org.