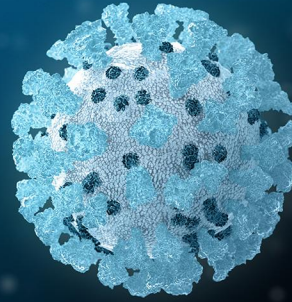


Medicare and COVID-19 vaccine scams

Tips to protect yourself



Scams related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) are rapidly increasing. Scammers are targeting older adults and those with serious long-term health conditions who appear to have a higher risk for serious illness from coronavirus. They're attempting to bill Medicare for sham tests or treatments related to the coronavirus and are targeting people to illegally get money and/or Medicare numbers.

What you should know to avoid COVID-19 vaccine scams

Scammers are rapidly altering their tactics and adapting their schemes to target the COVID-19 vaccine to prey on unsuspecting beneficiaries. Be vigilant and protect yourself from potential fraud concerning COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. Here's what you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine:

- You will not pay anything out of pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can't pay to get early access to the vaccine.
- Nobody legit will call you about the vaccine and ask for your Social Security, bank account, or credit card number. That's a scam.
- No one from Medicare, the health department, a vaccine distribution center or a health insurance company will contact you to ask for your Social Security number, your credit card or bank account information to sign you up to get the vaccine.

Tips to avoid COVID-19 vaccine fraud

- Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone other than your doctor, health care provider or other trusted representative.
- Protect your Medicare number and treat your Medicare card like a credit card.
- Never provide your Medicare number to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts or emails.
- Don't click on links from sources you don't know, which could put your computer or device at risk. Make sure the anti-malware and anti-virus software on your computer are up to date.
- Don't post on social media that you are getting tested for COVID-19. Scammers can use this to provide false reports and request your Medicare information.
- Be cautious when buying medical supplies from unverified sources, including online advertisements and email/phone solicitations.

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- Do your homework before you make a donation to a charity or crowdfunding site due to the public health emergency. Be particularly wary of any charities requesting donations by cash, gift card or wire transfer.
- Beware of providers who offer other products, treatments or medicines to prevent the virus. Check with your health care provider and Medicare before you pay for or receive any COVID-19-related treatment.
- If you get a phone call, text, email — or even someone knocking on your door — claiming they can get you early access to the vaccine, STOP. That's a scam!

How SHIBA, your local Senior Medicare Patrol, can help

To report COVID-19 Medicare vaccine fraud, contact your local SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) program, your Washington state Senior Medicare Patrol, at 1-800-562-6900. We can help clients prevent, detect and report Medicare and Medicaid fraud and abuse.

Part of the Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner, our trained SHIBA/SMP volunteers help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. We can help you with your questions, concerns or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. We also can provide information and educational presentations.

Other COVID-19 resources

- **Medicare and coronavirus:** www.insurance.wa.gov/medicare-and-coronavirus
- **Coronavirus Disease 2019:** <https://acl.gov/COVID-19>
- **Protect yourself from Medicare COVID-19 scams - Senior Medicare Patrol National Resource Center:** www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/COVID-19-Fraud.aspx
- **COVID-19 - CDC:** www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/
- **Coronavirus advice for consumers FTC:** www.ftc.gov/coronavirus/scams-consumer-advice
- **Medicare and coronavirus:** www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus
- **Vaccine locations (by county):** www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/VaccineLocations

Get help with Medicare

If you have questions about your Medicare coverage, contact the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) program. SHIBA is a free, unbiased and confidential Medicare counseling service of the Washington state Office of the Insurance Commissioner. We're statewide!

Call us at:
1-800-562-6900



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www.insurance.wa.gov/medicare