



At a Glance

The Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

Program works in partnership with government, non-governmental and “grassroots” community based organizations across the state to raise awareness about protecting, detecting and reporting healthcare errors, fraud and abuse.

- According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, healthcare errors, fraud and abuse cost American tax payers billions of dollars annually.

The MA SMP Program encourages consumers to keep a personal healthcare journal and use these journals to record their medications, prescribed and over the counter; all medical appointments, radiology appointments, home health services, lab tests, prescribed durable medical equipment, such as a wheelchair, CPAP machine etc. Consumers should use these journals to record all questions they may have for their physician/s or other health professionals as well as responses to their questions.

The MA SMP Program conducts outreach and free educational sessions across the state to empower Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, family members, caregivers and professionals on the importance of being an engaged healthcare consumers. Only through consumer engagement can we prevent, detect and report healthcare errors, fraud and abuse which are costly, but too often have health related consequences.

- According to the Institute of Medicine’s report, **TO ERR IS HUMAN: BUILDING A SAFER HEALTH SYSTEM**, approximately 98,000 lives are lost annually due to medical errors.

Healthcare Fraud is intentional deception or misrepresentation which can have an impact on the health and lives of beneficiaries and are costly in financial terms to the healthcare system and insurance industry.

Healthcare Errors and Abuses are typically unintentional incidents, practices or procedures that are inconsistent with sound medical, business or fiscal practices. Healthcare Errors and Abuses often result in payment for services that fail to meet professionally recognized standards of care or are medically unnecessary. These can be just as costly in terms of health and financial cost.

Consumers should protect all personal information including their Medicare, Mass Health/Medicaid card and Social Security cards as they would protect their credit card. Carry these cards only when needed.

SMP is a national program and there is one in each of the 50 states as well as the District of Columbia (D.C.), Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The MA SMP Program has been under the leadership of Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. since 1999. It is funded by the Administration for Community Living, a division of the Administration on Aging, Department of Health and Human Services.