



# Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Equity and Program Assessment Findings

PREPARED FOR:

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES, ADMINISTRATION FOR  
COMMUNITY LIVING

PREPARED BY:

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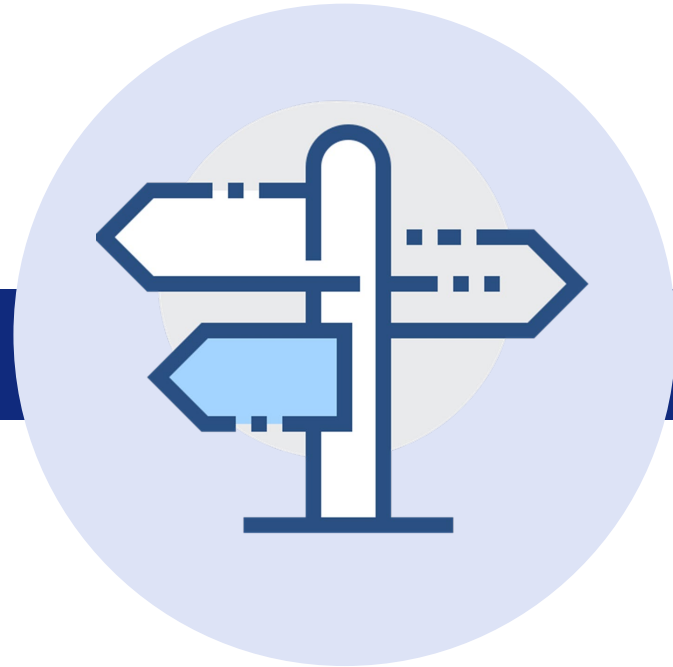
**1** **Assessment Overview**

**2** **Selected Key Findings**

**3** **Demographic Shifts**

**4** **Activity**

# Overview





## Program Overview

**SMP empowers and assists Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse (FEA) through outreach, counseling, and education.**



**SMP**

Senior Medicare Patrol

Preventing Medicare Fraud



## Assessment Overview

The SMP equity and program assessment was designed to examine the strengths, challenges, and opportunities for improvement with a strong focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

The current state assessment took place from October 2022 to November 2023 and reviewed data from 2020-2023. The assessment consisted of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis along with a literature and program information review.



## Scope & Methodology

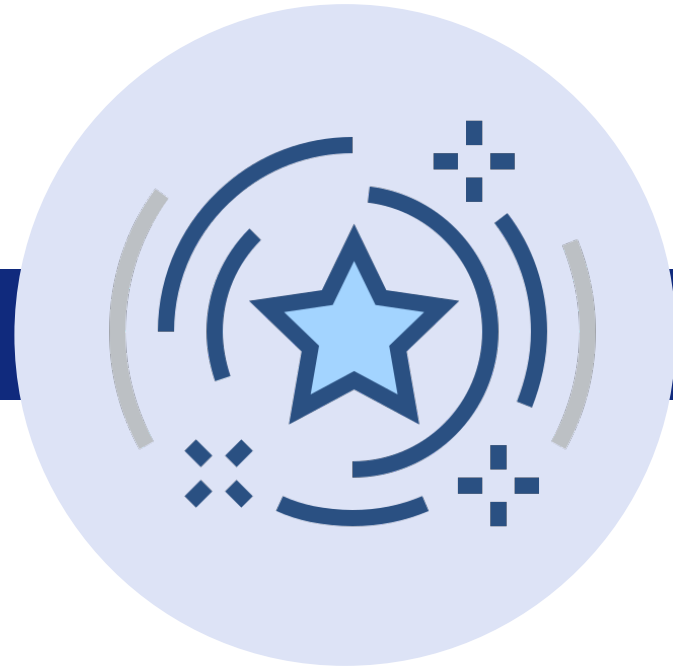
<b>Literature Review</b>	<b>113 Interviewees</b>	<b>Group Facilitations</b>	<b>Statistical Analysis</b>	<b>Geospatial Mapping</b>	<b>Quantitative Analysis</b>
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<b>Interviews by Category</b>	
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Resource Center</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>DEI Special Funding Grantees</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Administration for Community Living</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Program Directors<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Local Site Managers/Coordinators</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Team Members</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Other Federal Agencies</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>National Groups/Non-Profits</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>AIAN Organizations/ACL Title VI Office/SMP Directors who frequently engage with tribal &amp; native populations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Unsuccessful Grant Applicants</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Priority Populations</b>
<b>Rural Populations</b>
<b>Limited English Proficiency (LEP)</b>
<b>Adults with Disabilities (Beneficiaries under 65)</b>
<b>American Indian/Alaska Natives (AIAN)</b>
<b>Low-Income Populations</b>
<b>Other Racial Groups (e.g., Black, Hispanic, AAPI)</b>
<b>LGBTQ+ Individuals</b>

<sup>1</sup>Note: Program Directors who attended the 2023 SMP/SHIP/MIPPA National Conference and August 15, 2023 SMP Monthly Networking Call also contributed to the findings in this report.

## Key Findings





## BENEFICIARY ENGAGEMENT & EXPERIENCE

### **Lack of awareness limits access to SMP services**

While beneficiaries were generally pleased with SMP services, individuals from underserved communities face cultural, economic, and environmental barriers to access.

### **Outreach efforts do not target underserved communities**

Most grantees lacked targeted outreach initiatives for priority populations with greater vulnerability to Medicare fraud.

### **Language barriers limit equitable service**

The SMP program has limited ability to equitably serve beneficiaries with limited English proficiency (LEP) due to few multi-lingual team members and translated resources.





## GRANTEE OPERATIONS

**Resource challenges limit representation and impact program delivery**

Grantees experience recruitment and retention challenges and some struggle to create teams reflect the populations served. The time spent on grant administration has risen, reducing the available resources for program delivery.

**Community partnerships support outreach to underserved communities**

Grantees use partnerships to overcome multiple barriers to engaging underserved populations, including lack of language resources, transportation challenges, and lack of trust.

**Misperceptions and bias prevent effective outreach of underserved communities**

Interviews revealed misperceptions and bias around the diversity of beneficiary populations that impact DEIA initiatives. Demographic projections show significant increases in diversity in the 65+ population of multiple states over the next 10-20 years.



## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & COLLABORATION

### **Training and support for grantees is a program strength**

ACL and SMP Resource Center support, technical assistance, and training were frequently cited as program strengths. Grantees desire increased connection and learning, particularly to promote DEIA-supportive ideas.

### **Tracking return on investment is a challenge**

Grantees expressed frustration with the OIG and CMS case referral processes and coordination on performance measures 6-12 related to return-on-investment.

### **Current grant requirements may not align with DEIA goals**

Program measures prioritize total number of individuals reached and do not assess impact on those served. Outreach to underserved populations is resource intensive and negatively impacts the total beneficiaries served.



## What are the barriers beneficiaries experience when attempting to access or receive services?

Rank	Barrier						% of Interviewees n=113
1	Awareness of Senior Medicare Patrol						22%
2	Limited Availability of Resources in Languages Other Than English (e.g., materials, staff)						21%
3	Trust in Government (e.g., racial/cultural history, lived experience, politics)						19%
4	Transportation						18%
5	Internet Access						15%
6	Distance/Time to Reach Services for Individuals in Rural Areas						13%
7	Literacy Level						12%
8	Misunderstanding & Complexity of Medicare						11%
9	Negative Initial Contact Experience (e.g., delays, re-routing, lack of empathy, conscious or unconscious biases; first contact may not be with SMP)						10%
10*	Shame	Low Income	Fear	Medicare Costs	Home-Bound	Phone/Cell Phone Access	5%

\* Indicates a tie in rank.



## Key Takeaways

Many grantees are knowledgeable about the needs of diverse populations within their service areas and develop innovative solutions and individualized plans for outreach

Recruitment and retention challenges and competing priorities limit the time spent on counseling. Limited workforce diversity inhibits DEIA efforts.

Some grantees are concerned with their team's knowledge of culturally sensitive approaches, anti-racism, bias, and microaggressions.

Many grantees indicated that the time spent on grant administration has increased substantially and affects the time available to perform other duties.

Bias and misperceptions around beneficiary diversity affect outreach strategy. Projected growth in priority populations will require new approaches.

Partnerships with other service providers, community hubs, and media outlets positively impact trust, awareness, and community engagement.

DEIA-focused outreach is resource intensive and may reduce overall outreach numbers. Grantees expressed difficulty balancing total outreach with targeted outreach.



“When you don't have the staff to be able to be multilingual or go out in different neighborhoods or have that access, I think that's a huge barrier [...] in this economic timeframe, a lot of people maybe don't have that ability, if we're speaking equitably, to serve their time without being compensated.”



# Program Administration and Collaboration

## Tension between strategic program objectives and performance measures.

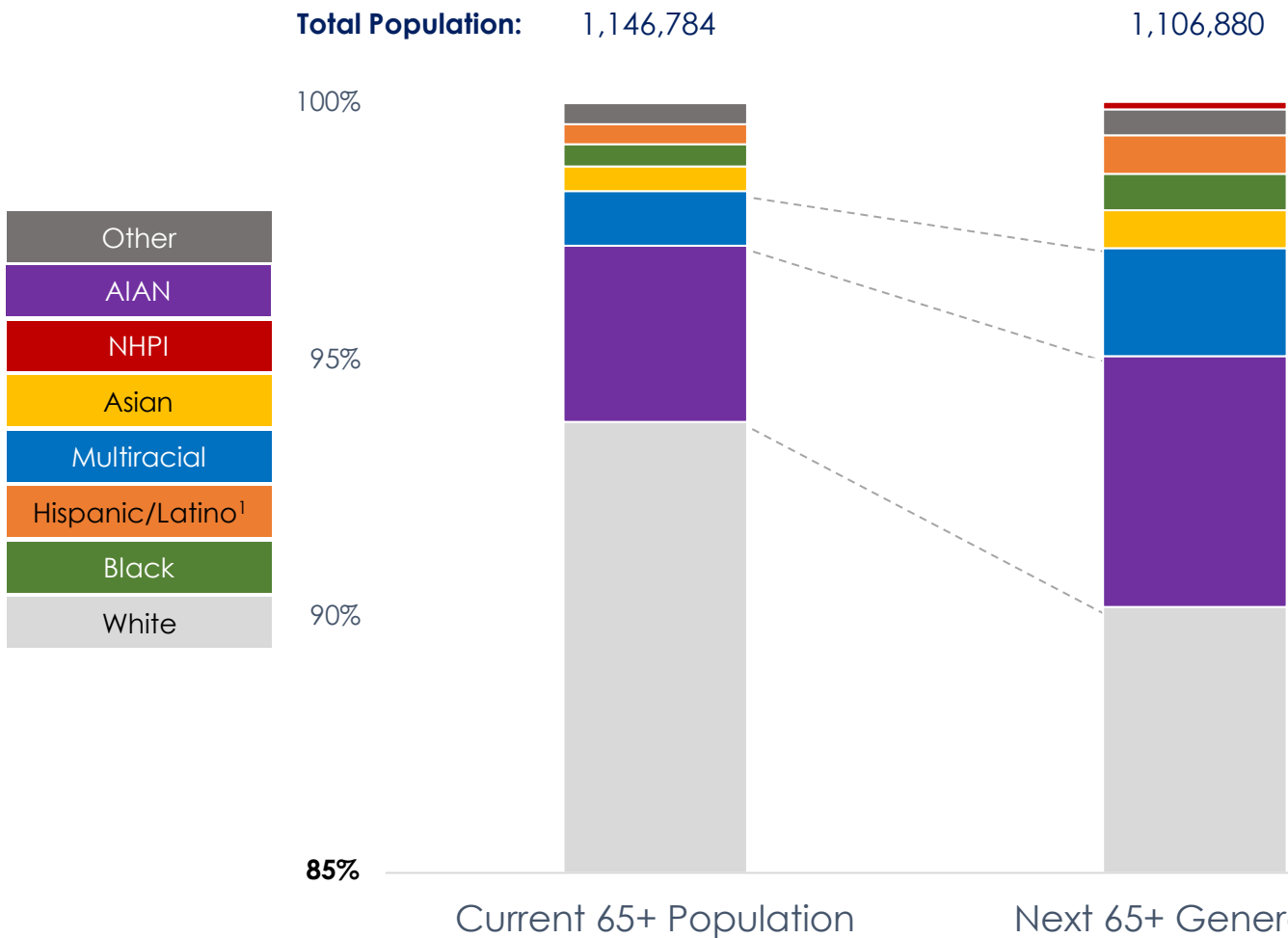
Strategic Program Objectives	SMP Performance Measures	
<p>1. Provide group education and one-on-one assistance to Medicare beneficiaries on a statewide basis, <b>with a specific emphasis on those with greatest need.</b></p>	<p>2. SMP Team Member Hours 3. Group Outreach and Education Events 4. People Reached Through Group Outreach and Education Events 5. Individual Interactions</p>	<p><b>There is no performance measure that assesses reach of priority populations.</b></p>
<p>2. Recruit, train, and retain a <b>diverse</b>, sufficient, <b>effective</b>, and <b>representative</b> workforce equipped to provide high-quality education and one-on-one support.</p>	<p>1. Active SMP Team Members</p>	<p><b>Team diversity metrics are not included in the related performance measures,</b></p>
<p>3. Monitor and assess SMP results through <b>operational and quality measures.</b></p>	<p>6. Cost Avoidance 7-8. Medicare Recoveries 9-10. Medicaid Recoveries 11. Savings to Beneficiaries 12. Other Savings</p>	<p><b>There are no operational or quality measures related to DEIA.</b></p>
<p>4. Position SMP to nimbly and effectively <b>respond to changes in the programmatic landscape.</b></p>		<p><b>It is unclear how landscape changes are monitored and measured.</b></p>

<sup>1</sup> Senior Medicare Patrol State Project Grants Funding Opportunity #HHS-2023-ACL-CIP-MPPG-006  
<sup>2</sup> ACL's SMP Performance Measure Definitions and Guidance, 12/23/2021

# Demographic Shift (Example 1)

## 65+ and 55-64 Population, by Race/Ethnicity

2021 ACS data



### Population Shifts

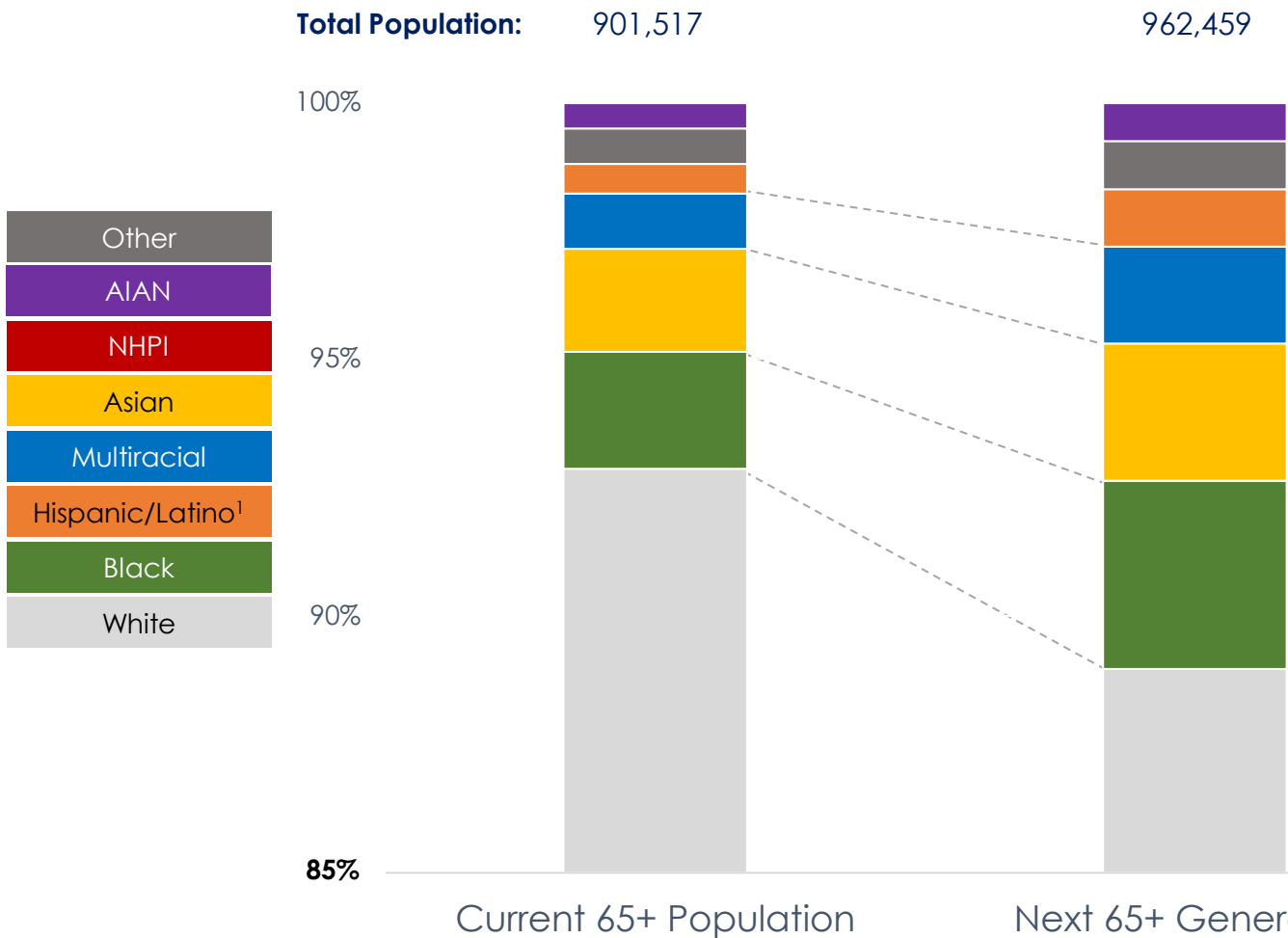
American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN)	13% increase
Multiracial	58% increase
Black	31% increase
Asian	21% increase
Hispanic/Latino	55% increase

<sup>1</sup> The Hispanic/Latino population is derived from the non-Latino, white population, excluding white individuals.

# Demographic Shift (Example 2)

## 65+ and 55-64 Population, by Race/Ethnicity

2021 ACS data



### Population Shifts

Black	36% increase
Asian	13% increase
Hispanic/Latino	64% increase
Multiracial	55% increase

<sup>1</sup>The Hispanic/Latino population is derived from the non-Latino, white population, excluding white individuals.

## ACTIVITY

### Ground Rules

Encourage diverse views

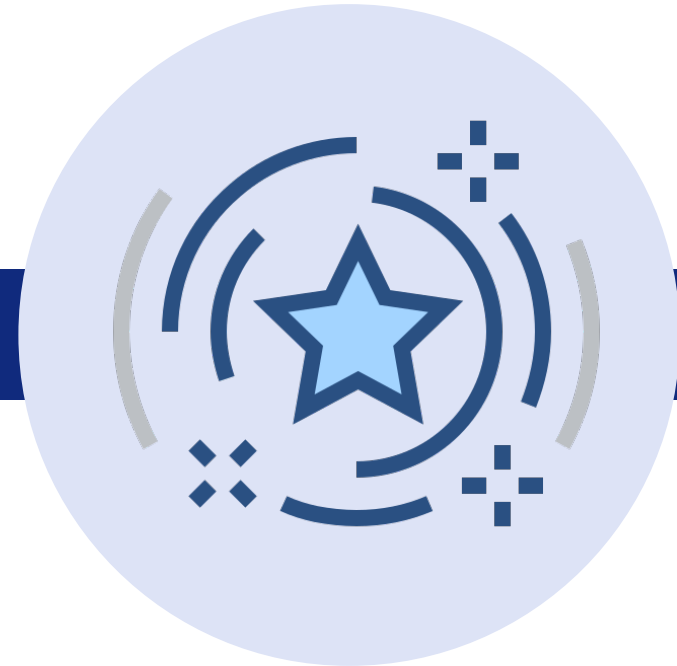
Think Big

Be Present and Engaged

Create Space for All Voices

Listen to Each Other

Challenge Assumptions





In light of changing demographic predictions, this state director seeks to reduce barriers faced by underserved populations (Rural, Racial and Ethnic Minorities, LGBTQIA+ Individuals, Low-Income Individuals, and Individuals with Low English Proficiency)

At your tables- choose one of the topics below to brainstorm recommendations the state director might consider.

## Recruitment

- What recruitment strategies would help the director reduce barriers and create a team that represents the population served?
- What recruitment or retention challenges might they face?
- What would help the director track their success?

## Outreach

- What outreach activities would help the director better reach the communities they serve?
- What challenges might they face?
- What metrics would help the director track their success?

## Training

- What training opportunities should the director consider to help meet their goals?
- What challenges might they face?
- What Metrics would help the director track their success?

You will have 15 minutes to discuss – choose one person from your table who will report out for your group.

**How might we adjust our performance measures?**



# Program Administration and Collaboration

## Tension between strategic program objectives and performance measures.

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**What ideas did you hear today that you  
might take home with you?**