

Using the Media for Outreach-Best Practices & the Power of a Story

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Why Local Media Is Important



Building Relationships with Media

- Strategies for building relationships with local media include:
 - Seek out investigative reporters in your area.
 - Invite them to emcee an event.
 - Include them in advisory groups, networking groups or other fraud-fighting groups of professionals you organize (IN-CASE).



Building Relationships with Media

- Put them on listservs for fraud updates—keeping SMP front and center.
- Be willing last minute to meet with them on current fraud trends.



Building Relationships with Media

- Reposting their stories on social media.
- Networking with higher-profile organizations, such as the Better Business Bureau, Secretary of State's Office, etc. (that usually already have relationships with media).



Building Relationships with Media



- Prepare questions you want answered.
- Some bring beneficiaries to IN SMP for help.
- Sometimes it's just **LUCK!**

Key to building media is knowing your state!

Know your populations

- Total Counties - 254
- Rural Counties - 191
- Urban Counties - 63



Rural Counties

- Local Newspapers - print
- Local Newspapers - online
- Local Radio Stations
- Church Bulletins
- SMP Flyers – Meals on Wheels
- Neighborhood Newsletters

Have you or
a loved one
experienced
a Medicare
scam?



If you experience a Medicare scam, call the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol toll-free to report the scam.

1-888-341-6187



Preventing Medicare Fraud

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90MPPG0056, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

Texas SMP - Scam of the Month

Meals on Wheels programs

Texas SMP Volunteers

Texas SMP Email Blast
(individuals sign up to receive)



TXSMP Scam of the Month Durable Medical Equipment Scams

Have you ever gotten a call from someone claiming to be Medicare? Do they offer you “free” supplies, such as back braces, knee braces, or even wheelchairs? This is a scam! Medicare does not call you to sell you products, and there’s no such thing as “free”—someone is paying for it, either you or Medicare!

What is Durable Medical Equipment?

Durable Medical Equipment, or DME, are medical supplies that can be reused, such as braces, monitors, wheelchairs, walkers, and so much more. DME can be pretty pricey, which is why scammers pretend to be DME suppliers. The scammers will create a fake company, use your Medicare number to charge Medicare for dozens of supplies, and then get a huge payout from Medicare. All the while, you receive nothing in return, or if you do receive supplies, they are a much lower quality than what you (or Medicare) paid for.

What do I do if I experience this scam?

If you receive calls from people offering supplies in exchange for your Medicare number, just hang up! People may also offer you “free” DME at health fairs or other events in exchange for your Medicare number. Do not accept this offer. If you needed DME, your doctor would prescribe it to you. If you receive DME you did not order in the mail, contact the company directly and send it back. Do not pay shipping for this. Finally, read your Medicare Summary Notices to ensure you’re not being charged for DME you never ordered.

Report, Report, Report!

If you experience a Durable Medical Equipment Scam, report the scam to the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol. They are able to assist in removing the charges from your Medicare and can guide you on how to return any unwanted DME that you received. They also contact the appropriate authorities that stop scammers in their tracks!

- To report Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse, call the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol toll-free at 1-888-341-6187

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Scam of the Month DME Scams

Have you seen charges on your Medicare Summary Notice for Medical Supplies you never ordered? Or received a call from someone offering “free” braces or wheelchairs? This is a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Scam!

Am I Being Scammed?

This scam can happen over the phone, through the mail, or even in person! If you ever receive an offer for “free” DME in exchange for your Medicare number, be suspicious! Don’t share your Medicare number with anyone other than a trusted healthcare provider. If you are in need of DME, contact your doctor.

Now What Do I Do?

If you see charges on your Medicare Summary Notice for DME you did not order, receive unwanted DME in the mail, or are offered “free” DME for your Medicare number, report the scam! **Call the Texas Senior Medicare Patrol to report at 888-341-6187.**

For up-to-date scam information, check out www.TexasSMP.org

Urban Counties

- Television News Interviews
- Radio
- Newspaper



Use your calendar for Media Campaigns

January 1 - New Years – Resolutions

March 3-9, 2024 -National Consumer Protection Week

April 18-28 – San Antonio Fiesta

April 21-27, 2024 - National Volunteer Week

May - Older Americans Month

June 5 -Medicare Fraud Prevention Week

October 15 – December 7 - Medicare Open Enrollment



Tips for Newspaper Media Outreach

- 1) Create a spreadsheet of newspapers
- 2) When the SMP National Center creates a new press release, update with your SMP info and email to newspaper list!
- 3) Use your timeline to send these local papers timely info.
- 4) If you have a media budget – advertise! In some cases, they will offer to run a free story with your ad!



REPORT MEDICARE FRAUD!
**CALL THE TEXAS SENIOR
MEDICARE PATROL**
888-341-6188



Don't reinvent the wheel

Utilize the SMP Resource Center

- Excellent Press Releases
- Good talking points for media
- Up to date information



Preparing for interviews -BEFORE

- Research the reporter and station
- Request the reporter send their questions in advance
- Send reporter information on the SMP program and mission
- If possible, request a 10-minute meeting before interview.



Make it easy

- Give reporter handout or email with information on story topic

Examples:

- Definition of topic (What is DME)
- Fraud information on topic
- SMP hotline number
- your contact information

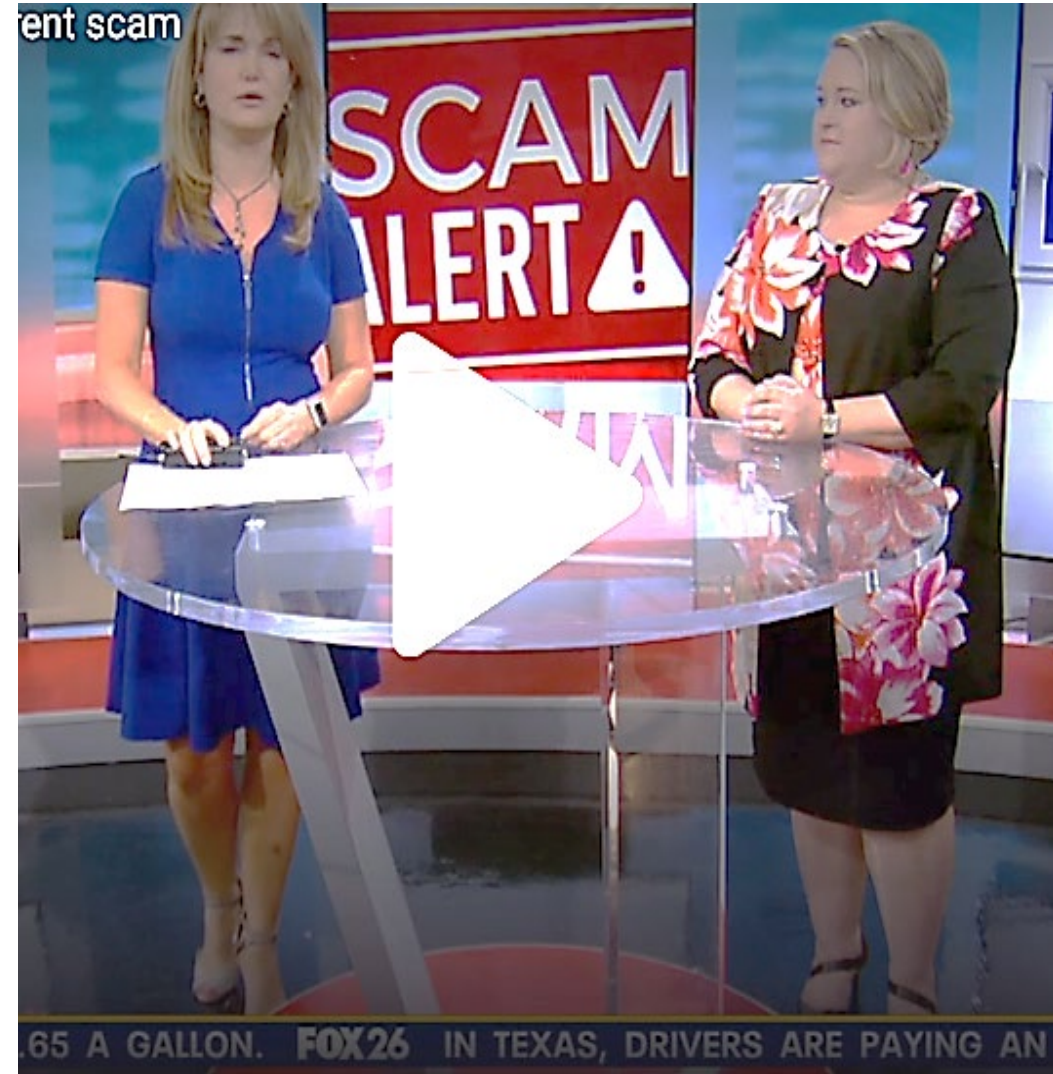


Keeping beneficiaries safe!

- Find out what the story is about and if they are planning to interview a beneficiary.
- Educate the reporter on protecting beneficiaries' confidentiality by
 - Not showing their Medicare Number
 - Making out identify on Medicare Summary Notices
- Ensure beneficiaries' information is protected, request to see story before it runs.

Interview Tips

- Stick to what you know
- Everything is ALWAYS on the record
- Be personable and project enthusiasm
- TURN OFF CELL PHONE
- Eye contact is key
- I give out my own work phone number!



Media Interviews

Tips for Working with Reporters

Use your tools!
The Center has helpful tips
for interviewing!

1. **Do your homework.** Research the reporter and the media outlet to see what articles have been done in the past. Are they fair and balanced?
2. **Know what to expect.** How long will the interview last? Will others be interviewed? If so, who? When is the story scheduled to appear?
3. **Be prepared.** Develop three key messages and supporting points. Gather figures, statistics, and other relevant data.
4. **Be dependable.** Show up on time. If you're going to be late, let the reporter know, or offer to reschedule. Reporters should also respect your time. If you offer to follow up with more information after the interview, follow through.
5. **Be clear and concise.** Know what message you want to deliver to your audience and deliver it. Rambling leads to errors. It is also more likely your key points won't be in the story because you've overwhelmed the reporter.
6. **Be conversational.** Avoid acronyms and jargon. If you must use them, be sure to explain them. Think about the reporter's audience and tailor your conversation.
7. **Be transparent.** If you don't know the answer to a question or cannot answer, be truthful. Never wing it. Never lie. Offer to follow up with an answer later.
8. **Stick to what you know.** Do not comment on issues outside your area of expertise. If possible, offer to put a reporter in touch with someone who can answer.
9. **Learn how to handle tough questions.** Don't get caught off guard. What's the one question you most dread being asked? Make sure to have an answer for it.
10. **Don't speculate or offer opinion.** The purpose of an interview is to deliver factual comments. Leave speculation and opinion to the editorial writers and pundits.
11. **Never speak off the record.** There is no guarantee a reporter will honor the request, especially if you say something intriguing enough.
12. **Keep your guard up.** Don't be lulled into a false sense of security when a reporter puts away the pen or camera. Consider everything on the record.
13. **Avoid saying, "no comment."** People automatically assume guilt. The tendency is to think there is something to hide.
14. **Prepare for the final interview question.** At the end of an interview, reporters often ask whether you have anything else to add. Don't waste this opportunity! Reiterate a key message, deliver a call to action, or clarify a point.
15. **Become a resource.** Reporters appreciate people who make their jobs easier. If you have a useful resource or lead, share it.

Finally!

Its okay to turn
down an interview!








Ask if the interview is going to be posted on social media.

Repost to your SMP social media!

Media & Working With Beneficiaries



Beneficiary Engagement

-  During intake ask if they would share their story with local media, if appropriate.
-  Remember that some beneficiary stories may interest reporters more than others.
-  If the reporter is interested in a beneficiary story, try to determine the interview details.
-  Beneficiary information should be protected. The beneficiary should contact the reporter, not the other way around.
-  If the beneficiary would like SMP support talking to the media, make sure that the SMP does not tell the beneficiary's story – the information should be provided by the beneficiary directly.

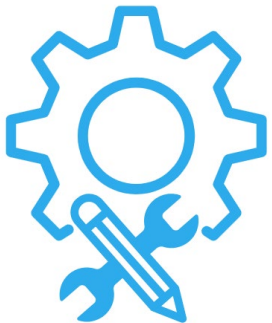
Media Protocol & Training



Have a media-related protocol.



Know who is and is not authorized to speak to the media within your program and/or organization.



Have media-related training.



Resource Center

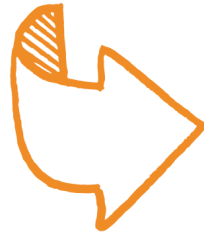
Media Resources

Press releases



ACL media training

Media handout



National Website

Contact the Center!



How to Work with Local Media

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Overview

This document provides guidance for the SMP network on engaging with media, why it is important, and how to do so effectively while representing your program/organization professionally and ensuring confidentiality for beneficiaries and people who experienced potential fraud.

Why Local Media are Important

Working with media can be a valuable, compelling way to educate the public about potential fraud, errors, and abuse. Local media serve their communities, providing information that directly affects the lives of their audiences. They are seen as trusted sources of information. While many people think fraud, waste, and abuse only happen elsewhere, local media can show people what is happening in their neighborhoods. Sharing personal stories and offering information on local fraud trends can be among the most effective ways to prevent others from falling for potential schemes or fraud. Fraud schemes migrate as fraudsters evolve their tactics and types of schemes they use. It is important to understand how to best work with the media to share this information and empower people to protect themselves and others.

their story with local media

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fraud schemes with
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