

# The SMP SCOOP

PROTECT DETECT REPORT

JUNE 2021



The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Scoop is prepared by the GWAAR SMP Team to help Medicare beneficiaries and their advocates prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, abuse, and errors.

Please feel free to share this publication with others who may benefit from its contents.

## TO CONTACT WI SMP

**Call:** (888) 818-2611

**E-mail:** [smp-wi@gwaar.org](mailto:smp-wi@gwaar.org)

### Website:

<https://gwaar.org/senior-medicare-patrol>

**To subscribe, please send us an e-mail.**



## Onward to Better Health

*By the GWAAR Medicare Outreach Team*



As we slowly emerge from this pandemic, now is a great time to reflect on your overall wellbeing. It's a good opportunity to focus on health so you can enjoy any forthcoming activities that have been put on hold. And taking advantage of Medicare preventive benefits is the perfect way to assess your well-being with the goal of better health!

Preventive services can help you avert illnesses and detect

health problems early when treatment works best. Medicare provides beneficiaries access to a wide range of preventive tests and screenings, most at no extra cost. If you're new to Medicare, a "Welcome to Medicare" preventive visit is covered during the first 12 months you are enrolled in Part B. The visit includes a review of your medical and social history as well as education and counseling about preventive services, including certain screenings, shots, and referrals for other care if needed. Once you've had Part B for longer than 12 months, you can get a yearly "Wellness" visit to develop or update a personalized prevention plan based on your current health and risk factors. Note: The Wellness visit is not the same as an annual physical exam.

You pay nothing for the "Welcome to Medicare" visit or yearly "Wellness" visit if your doctor or other health care provider accepts Medicare assignment. If additional tests or services are performed during the same visit that aren't covered under the preventive benefit, you may have to pay coinsurance, and the Part B deductible may apply.

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*Onward to Better Health* continued from page 1



Medicare also covers screening tests for breast cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity management, and osteoporosis, just to name a few. You can find a complete list of Medicare-covered preventive services in your *Medicare and You 2021* handbook or on the Medicare website at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). Talk to your doctor about what screenings and shots are right for you.

For assistance with Medicare questions or unbiased information about health insurance plans/benefits and counseling, contact the Medigap Helpline (1-800-242-1060) or connect with your local Aging and Disability Resource Center, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc>.

## How to Avoid Overmedication

*By the GWAAR Legal Services Team*



On average, people over age 65 take over 14 prescription medications a year, which does not include the many over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, vitamins, or supplements an older person may take. The sheer number of medications alone puts older people at risk of negative drug side effects, not to mention that older bodies process medications differently. As a result, older individuals are at a higher risk of harmful drug reactions and hospitalizations. In fact, the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) says people over age 65 are twice as likely to go to the emergency room due to a harmful drug reaction, and seven times more likely to be hospitalized. The good news is that many adverse drug reactions can be prevented.

**Here are some tips for safely managing your medication intake:**

***Make a List.*** Always keep an updated list of all the medications you take, the doses, and when they're taken. Be sure to include any OTC drugs, vitamins, supplements, and herbal or other remedies. Keep

*Continued on page 4*

# The Many Things You Can Do Online With Social Security

By Elida Elizondo, Social Security Public Affairs Specialist

Are you looking for new ways to save time? Check out our online services available through your secure *my* Social Security account. We have lots to offer you online whether you receive benefits from Social Security or not.

**If you do not currently receive benefits, you can:**

- Request a replacement Social Security card.
- Review your earnings history and see an estimate of your future Social Security benefits.
- Compare benefit amounts depending on what age you start receiving benefits.
- Apply for retirement benefits when you are ready.
- Check the status of your Social Security application.

**If you already receive benefits, you can:**

- Get a benefit verification or proof of income letter.
- Request a replacement Social Security or Medicare card.
- Set up or change direct deposit.
- Change your address.

- Get a replacement Social Security 1099 form (SSA-1099).
- Opt-out of certain mailed notices.

Your personal *my* Social Security account includes a secure Message Center where you can receive sensitive communications. For example, you can view your annual cost-of-living adjustments before you would normally receive them in the mail. You will receive both mailed and online notices unless you opt-out of receiving notices by mail that are available online.

We designed these online features to save you time. Create your personal *my* Social Security account today at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount).

We offer many other online resources at [www.ssa.gov/online services](http://www.ssa.gov/online services). Please let friends and family know they can access them from the comfort of their home or office, and on the go from their mobile phones.



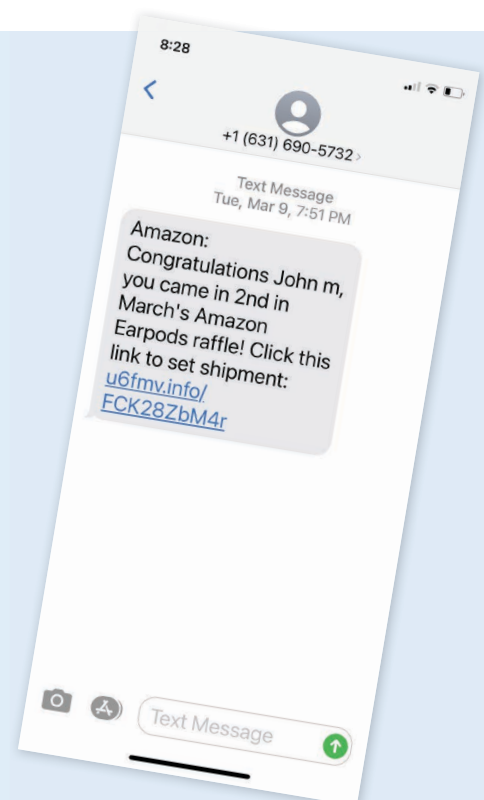
## You Got Lucky and Won a Raffle From Amazon? Watch Out – It's Another Scam!

By Tiffany Schultz, BBB SW WI Regional Director

In 2020, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) received 771 reports of scams impersonating Amazon. Amazon was the second most-impostored brand after the Social Security Administration. Scammers are again impersonating Amazon, this time through a text scam that claims you've won a raffle for a fitness watch, earbuds, or other tech gadget.

**How the scam works**

A congratulatory text comes to your phone indicating you have won. The text message includes instructions to click a suspicious link to arrange delivery of your prize.



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## PROTECT DETECT REPORT

### *How to Avoid Overmedication continued from page 2*

a copy yourself and share the list and updates with all their doctors and caregivers. Take the list to all medical appointments and keep it on hand in case of emergencies.

**Organize medications.** Consider using a pill organizer or ask the pharmacist for tips on keeping track of medications. If you have vision limitations, ask the pharmacist for large print labels on medication bottles.

#### **Ask before taking over-the-counter medications.**

Always check with the doctor or pharmacist before taking any OTC drug, vitamin, or supplement because they could interact with prescription medications. OTC medications could also cause serious side effects in older adults or lead to accidental overdoses.

**Review your medications.** At least once or twice per year, ask your primary doctor to review the entire list of medications, supplements, and vitamins you take. Some may no longer be needed, or the dose could be lowered, so ask if each one is still needed at the current dose. Often, if you've been hospitalized, there may be medications on the list for conditions that occurred in the hospital but are no longer present. The orders for drugs given in the hospital tend to carry over after discharge. You should ask whether these drugs are still needed because there is a strong tendency to continue anything prescribed at any time regardless of necessity going forward.

**Ask questions.** Unfortunately, our current state of drug pricing usually means the only question asked about medications is "how much will this cost me?" While paying for your medications is important, you should also do the following:

- Whenever a new medication is prescribed or the dosage is changed, ask why.
- Check new medications for potential drug interactions with existing medications, especially if you are taking more than five medications.
- Ask about the purpose of the medication and how you will know if it's working.
- Ask what side effects you should watch for.

- Ask when and how the medication should be taken.
- Ask what to do if you miss a dose.
- Ask whether it can affect any other medical conditions you have.

**Follow directions.** Be sure to take medicines exactly as your doctor has prescribed. Make sure you understand how, when, and for how long the medication should be taken. Fill prescriptions at the same pharmacy so it has a record of all the medications that are being taken. Let the pharmacy know if there were any bad reactions so they can keep that on file.

**Report problems.** If you develop new health problems after starting a new medication, it may be a negative reaction. Tell the doctor immediately. If the reaction causes a serious issue, like difficulty breathing or swelling in the throat, call 911 and go to the emergency room right away.

For more information (including an overmedication tip sheet), see

- <https://www.healthinaging.org/sites/default/files/media/pdf/HIA-TipSheet%20AvoidingOvermedication%20Jan%202019.pdf>
- <https://dailycaring.com/8-tips-to-avoid-harmful-drug-reactions-and-overmedication-in-seniors/>





## Wisconsin SMP Partnership With Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council

*Working to enhance the quality of life for all Native people*

*By Kassy Heard, Tribal Technical Assistance Center, Program Director*



*Grace delivering bags in St. Croix community.*

Grace Livingston and Kassy Heard are busy preparing for when we can travel and visit again. We are planning informational materials as well as SMP logoed items for giveaway.

Until we can meet face to face, Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council has been working to deliver outreach materials by Elder bag distribution. The April/May distribution to St. Croix, Oneida Nation, Lac Courte Oreilles, and Ho Chunk Nation included the *Scoop* newsletter. The next Elder outreach bag distribution will include the following: Forest County Potawatomi, Lac du Flambeau, and Sokaogon tribes. These are planned to go out in June.

We are hoping it will not be long until we can meet face to face again but until then, please contact Grace at 715-661-4067 and Kassy at 715-588-1016 if you have any questions.

### ***You Got Lucky and Won a Raffle From Amazon? Watch Out – It's Another Scam! continued from page 3***

Don't click! The text message is not from Amazon. The bogus raffle and suspicious link are part of a con used to trick you into visiting a phishing website to share account credentials, as well as personal and financial information with fraudsters.

#### **How to avoid text scams**

***Don't believe every text you receive.*** As a general rule, companies cannot send you text messages unless you opt in. If you receive a text message from a company you have not given permission to contact you by text, proceed with caution.

***Know the classic signs of a text scam.*** In most cases, bogus text messages include an unusual link and may promise a reward, threaten a punishment, or generally appear harmless because it seems to be coming from a well-known individual or organization.

***Think before you click.*** Don't click on links in strange or suspicious text messages. It's likely an attempt to gain access to your personal information or install malware on your device.

***Confirm the information.*** If an offer seems strange or too good to be true, call or email the company directly by looking up official contact information.

***Ignore instructions to text "STOP" or "NO."*** Even if you know the message is a scam, don't text back. Scammers want you to text back to verify your number is a working number. Instead, simply block the number so you won't receive future messages.

***Double down on security.*** It's always a good practice to periodically update and strengthen the login credentials for your shopping and financial accounts. If you clicked on the link, do a security sweep for viruses and malicious software that may have been installed on your device.

***Report encounters with this scam.*** Your report helps to warn others of scams taking place in the marketplace. Report this scam to the Better Business Bureau at [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker), and to Amazon at [stop-spoofing@amazon.com](mailto:stop-spoofing@amazon.com).



# CMS Warns of Medicaid, Medicare Scams

By SMP Resource Center

Every day, Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries from across the country receive “convincing” calls from individuals claiming to be from Medicare card services and requesting personal identifying information. Often these callers are saying they need to update or verify information on their insurance cards for a variety of reasons.

A spokesperson on behalf of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, CMS, said there is no such attempt to gather personal, health or medical related information, nor to distribute new or replace existing Medicaid or Medicare cards.

“Older Americans are particularly vulnerable to Medicare fraud and scams,” said Ashley Negron, press officer at Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. “CMS takes these scams seriously. We consistently warn Medicare beneficiaries that scammers may try to steal their Medicare number, banking information, or other personal information and data. We urge seniors to make sure they do not give out their Medicare number and to share it only with their doctor, pharmacist, hospital, health insurer, or other trusted healthcare provider.”

Starting in April 2018, CMS began distributing new Medicare cards replacing the Social Security-based Medicare number with a new randomly generated Medicare number, for all Medicare beneficiaries in an effort to reduce Medicare and Social Security fraud and abuse.

“By now, all beneficiaries should have this new paper card...,” said Negron. “There are no new efforts underway to replace this card, and even with this change, people with Medicare should still guard their Medicare card and treat it like a credit card; check Medicare claims summary forms for errors, and be wary of any unsolicited requests for their Medicare number. Most importantly, Medicare will never call beneficiaries to ask for or check Medicare numbers.”

According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid, scammers have become very sophisticated and advanced.

**Medicare fraud hurts us all.  
When thieves steal from  
Medicare, there is less  
money for the health care  
you really need.**



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“Oftentimes Medicare scams include offers for free or reduced-price medical equipment, consultations, or health services. These scams can happen anywhere, including through telemarketing calls, health fairs, and even knocking on doors,” Negron said.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services remind the public:

- Medicare will never contact anyone for their Medicare Number or other personal information unless the person has given them permission in advance — for example a person reaches out to CMS for help with a Medicare claim.
- Medicare will never call to sell anything.
- Beneficiaries may get calls from people promising things if they give them a Medicare Number. Don’t do it.
- Medicare will never visit someone’s home.
- Medicare can’t enroll anyone over the phone unless, again, the beneficiary called CMS first.
- CMS recommends the following “Dos” and “Don’ts” to protect individuals against Medicare Fraud.

### Do:

- Protect your Medicare number and your Social Security number and treat both as if they were credit cards.

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# What's the "Scoop"?

*By Ingrid Kundinger, SMP Project Manager*

## Here are a few important things for you to know:

- **The Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol is here to help!** We continue to work from home but are here to help Medicare beneficiaries, family members, caregivers, and professionals. We are also on "Zoom Patrol" these days, available for virtual presentations and conversations about Medicare fraud, abuse, and errors. If you are looking for that sort of presentation, please let us know!

### Here's the Scoop on how you can reach us:

**Call:** (888) 818-2611

**E-mail:** [smp-wi@gwaar.org](mailto:smp-wi@gwaar.org)

**Website:** <https://gwaar.org/senior-medicare-patrol>

**Facebook:** @WisconsinSeniorMedicarePatrol

- **Back Braces. Knee Braces. Wrist Braces. Oh My!** Wisconsin Medicare beneficiaries are calling our Helpline to report that they have been called about "free" braces to help with pain, all paid for by Medicare. With a quick verification of a Medicare number, this brace will be sent directly to you. Is this too good to be true?

### Here's the

### **Scoop:**

The short answer is YES, this is too good to be true! While Medicare does cover medical

equipment such as braces, an order from your health care provider is required. The calls that you get for this type of thing, out of the blue, are scam calls. The caller, who often identifies as calling "on behalf of Medicare," is looking for one thing, your Medicare number. Once you verify your Medicare number, the fraudster will likely submit a claim to Medicare with your information and send you some medical equipment that was not ordered by your health care provider.

**How can you avoid this type of scam?** Don't share personal information, including your

Medicare number, over the phone. Period.

Remember that no one from Medicare is likely to call you, so if someone identifies themselves as being from Medicare, that is a red flag. Hang up the phone! If you think you could benefit from a brace of some sort, talk with your health care provider about this directly, not someone who calls you out of the blue.

If you have received this type of call and did share your Medicare number, please call us so that we can talk about next steps and things for you to be on the lookout for. Don't be embarrassed that it happened to you, we make no judgments and realize that the fraudsters are very convincing and good at what they do. It's important to report these things and make sure that your Medicare number is protected.

### • Genetic Testing/Cancer Screening Scams:

We are receiving complaints about genetic testing and/or cancer screening calls again. The caller will ask about a history of cancer or heart disease or some other health concern and then offer to send you a "free" testing kit, covered by Medicare, that you can complete in the comfort of your own home and then send back to receive results. A simple verification of your Medicare number and the kit will be on its way. What's the scoop with this?

**Here's the Scoop:** These callers are up to no good! Unsolicited calls of this type are fraudsters looking for your personal information to scam you and Medicare. If you get a call like this, just hang up the phone! It will save you a lot of problems. Always talk directly with your health care provider about any sort of screening or testing, not a random person on the phone.

We are hearing from our counterparts across the country that cardiac genetic testing schemes are on the rise. In this case, the caller is offering cardiac-specific genetic testing and requesting a Medicare number to get the test kit sent to you. This type of call is a scam, hang up!







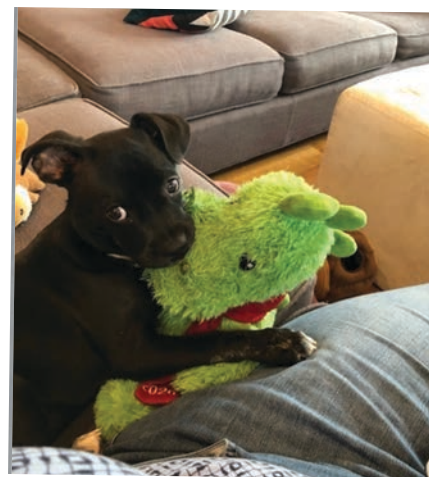
# Views & Activities



*Bennett, a Lynx Point Siamese, provides great comfort during rough days.*



*SMP Annual National Conference – once again, virtual.*



*A puppy named Ace, a Boston terrier/lab mix from a local rescue. There seems to be a trend of new household pets during the pandemic!*



*A trip through Flambeau View Greenhouse, so much to choose from!*







*Up early at the start of a day, a most peaceful time!*



*And at the end of a day. So serene.*



*Finally, a chance to celebrate a special occasion!*



*Enjoying the blooming trees in the neighborhood!*





# Fraud Scheme Backfires

By Attorney Kate Schilling, Elder Law & Advocacy Center



A doctor from Texas was sentenced to 10 years in prison for health care fraud conspiracy. The doctor was the owner of Texas Center for Orthopedic and Spinal Disorders. He admitted to conspiring with his wife, and a physical therapist who worked at the center, to fraudulently bill insurance for services never rendered, psychotherapy services not provided, and improperly prescribed Schedule II controlled substance medications. Between 2014 and 2017, more than \$10 million in claims were submitted to Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE. On

multiple occasions the doctor billed for 100 hours of work in a single 24-hour day.

In an attempt to destroy evidence related to the scheme, the doctor and his wife had a bonfire outside of their home where they burned documents. The blaze got out of control and burned down their \$2.3 million home. After the fire was put out, the firefighters were still able to recover some of the burned documents from the outdoor fireplace.

The doctor was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison. His wife received a sentence of 18 months for her participation in the conspiracy. And the physical therapist received a sentence of 36 months. The doctor also agreed to a judgment against him and his clinic of \$11 million, which will be paid by liquidating his own real estate assets. The whistleblower in this False Claims Act case is entitled to 17% of the government's recovery (approximately \$1.8 million).

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndtx/pr/fort-worth-doctor-sentenced-10-years-health-care-fraud-conspiracy>

### **CMS Warns of Medicaid, Medicare Scams** *continued from page 6*

- Use a calendar to record all your doctor's appointments and any tests you get.
- Review your Medicare claims for errors and problems, with the services you received, including things like fake charges, double billing, or other fraudulent activity, waste, or abuse.
- Remember that nothing is ever "free." Don't accept offers of money or gifts for free medical care.
- Learn more about Medicare and recent scams.
- Know what a Medicare plan can and can't do before you join.
- Visit [medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud](https://www.medicare.gov/forms-help-resources/help-fight-medicare-fraud)
- except your doctor or people you know should have it.
- Accept offers of money or gifts for free medical care.
- Allow anyone, except your doctor or other Medicare providers, to review your medical records or recommend services.
- Accept medical supplies, equipment, or genetic testing kits from door-to-door salesmen or solicitors at a mall or fair.
- Let anyone persuade you to receive health care services you don't need, such as genetic testing. Only make these decisions with your doctor.
- Contact your doctor to request a service that you don't need.

#### **Don't:**

- Give your Medicare card, Medicare number, Social Security card, or Social Security number to anyone

Beneficiaries or their caregivers can call the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) toll-free Helpline at (888) 818-2611 to report suspected fraud or abuse.



## Scoop Chatter

**Patrol Out on ZOOM:** SMP is available to deliver the Protect – Detect – Report message through virtual presentations. We can provide a stand-alone event or partner with another organization. Please email us at [smp-wi@gwaar.org](mailto:smp-wi@gwaar.org) or call (888) 818-2611 to learn more.

### Welcome to Medicare Virtual Fair June 23, 2021 | Open From 3:00–7:00 PM ET

Learn about signing up for Medicare! This fair is for people turning 65 or joining Medicare because of a disability. Learn about Medicare – and all its parts – to assist you in your initial enrollment decisions. There is no cost to attend. Join us online for any length of time!

For more information, go to: <https://www.shiptacenter.org/about-medicare/news> or call 877-839-2675

Get trusted, unbiased Medicare education to help you make Medicare choices that best meet your needs.

### A Few Comments From Our Readers

"Easy to read. It's all usable, all appropriate. It's very relevant information."

"... there's a lot of informative stuff in there that can help people."

"...read it cover to cover."

**Announcement From CMS:** The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced that the first annual Medicare Fraud Prevention Day will occur in the fall 2021. Be on the lookout for more information to come!

**Notable Website Improvements:** The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has made a concerted effort to improve the user experience on the Medicare.gov website. Several webpages have been redesigned, including the **Getting Started with Medicare** page intended for new Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare beneficiaries are able to sign up for monthly email updates from CMS about relevant topics, important changes, and educational information. CMS has also improved the online **Care Compare** tool that allows beneficiaries to find nursing homes, doctors, hospitals, and other providers in their area.

### \$2.6 Billion in Health Care Recoveries in 2019 from:

- Drug and Medical Device Makers
- Managed Care Providers
- Hospitals
- Pharmacies
- Hospice Organizations
- Laboratories
- Physicians

Learn more about Medicare fraud at [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org).

<https://www.healthcarefraud.com/finance/day-collected-20b-100-recoveries-2019-healthcare-sector>

#SMP

**Valuable Resource Tool:** The CMS continues to work on improving the functionality of the Medicare Plan Finder tool which allows users to compare Medicare Advantage or Part D drug plan coverage and pricing. The sort and filter options for viewing results have recently been improved. CMS is still working to streamline the printing function on the Plan Finder as well as the ability to send Plan Finder comparison results via email. These are changes that Medicare advocates requested after last year's Open Enrollment Period.





# Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

The Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance Program is a program to assist eligible renters impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic who need help with their rent, utilities, and/or other housing stability. Eligible households may receive up to 12 months of assistance to help with current and/or overdue utility bills, rent, and/or other services that help them remain in their homes.

### Who is Eligible?

***A household may qualify if at least one or more individuals in the home meet all the following criteria:***

1. Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, experienced major

costs, or experienced financial struggles due to COVID-19;

2. Demonstrates a risk of being evicted or losing their home; and,
3. Has a household income at or below 80% of the county median.

Note: The counties of Brown, Dane, Milwaukee, and Waukesha, as well as the cities of Madison and Milwaukee, are operating their own emergency rental assistance programs and are not participating in the Wisconsin Emergency Rental Assistance program.

For more information, visit: <https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/WERA.aspx>

## COVID-19 Funeral Assistance

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is now accepting applications for financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses. If you paid for funeral services and burial or cremation for someone whose death was caused by or likely a result of COVID-19, you can apply by calling the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Line at 844-684-6333 (TTY: 800-462-7585) between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. Central time. Interpreters will be available. No online or mailed applications will be accepted.

### To be eligible for funeral assistance, the following criteria must be met:

- The death must have occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia;
- The death certificate must say that the death was caused by or likely a result of COVID-19 or COVID-19-like symptoms; and
- The applicant must be a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien who incurred funeral expenses after January 20, 2020.
- The deceased person is not required to have been a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified alien.

### When you apply, you will need to provide:

- Your Social Security number and date of birth.
- The deceased person's Social Security number and date of birth.

- Your current mailing address and telephone number.
- To receive funds by direct deposit, the routing and account number of your checking or savings account.
- An official death certificate that states that the death was directly or indirectly caused by COVID-19 and shows that the death occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia.
- Documentation of funeral expenses, including receipts, the funeral home contract, etc., that include the applicant's name, the deceased person's name, the amount of funeral expenses, and the dates the funeral expenses happened.
- Proof of funds received from other sources specifically for use toward funeral costs, including burial or funeral insurance, preplanned and prepaid funerals, or financial assistance from other sources.

Currently, there is no deadline to apply for COVID-19 funeral assistance.

***Be aware that FEMA has received reports of scammers reaching out to people offering to register them for funeral assistance. Please note that FEMA will not contact people before they apply for assistance.***

## The Value of Volunteers

*By Molly Kelly, SMP Volunteer Coordinator*

National Volunteer Week provides an occasion every year to highlight the impact that volunteer service has in every community, to thank those individuals who lend their time and talent in the service of others, and to encourage volunteerism in the coming year. It is a time to express gratitude and appreciation for the enormous impact volunteers have in so many lives every day across the United States. Even though National Volunteer Week was officially celebrated April 18-24, volunteerism is always a worthy topic!

President Richard Nixon established this week of distinction in 1974 as an opportunity to recognize volunteers who do the unsung work of building stronger communities. Every day, volunteers help organizations fill critical gaps in service for nearly every community throughout the country. They provide 8.8 billion hours of service annually with an estimated annual value of over \$184 billion.

The American tradition of volunteering goes way back in history. Women used to volunteer their time during the American Civil War to sew supplies for the soldiers off at war. Former President George H. W. Bush showed his support for volunteering in his 1991 State of the Union Address, commending "a volunteer's generous gesture," and calling it "an idea that is simply right."

Every week of the year, the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol relies on and appreciates the value that volunteers provide to our mission. The program was founded on the premise that volunteers would play a vital role. And our volunteers do indeed fill that vital role! Ingrid and Molly could not do this work without the contribution that the volunteer team makes. We are most grateful for everyone's participation!



**Volunteers are an asset to our program and play a major role in the organization's success.**

**Please consider joining our team!**

Contact Molly Kelly at 888-818-2611 or at [molly.kelly@gwaar.org](mailto:molly.kelly@gwaar.org) for more information.





**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

IOWA COUNTY  
**HeART**  
COALITION  
Healthy Aging in Rural Towns

# Staying at Home...Reducing Sitting Time

*Reprinted with Permission from the Wisconsin Institute of Healthy Aging (WIHA), May 6, 2020*

Sitting too much is not good for your health, yet many of us do it. Studies have linked inactivity with obesity, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, and even early death. Reducing your sitting time can improve your strength and balance while reducing your risk for chronic diseases. Here are some ways to challenge yourself to stand more and sit less:



### STAND UP DURING COMMERCIALS

It is easy to find yourself glued to the TV for hours at a time. Try making a new rule for yourself – stand up during the commercials. Or, go one better, walk around the house during commercial breaks.



### MOVE THE REMOTE

Instead of having the TV remote control right next to you, move it across the room. Inconvenient? Yes – and that is the point. It forces you to get up every time you want to change the channel.



### TAKE UP A HOBBY THAT INVOLVES STANDING

Make hobbies, old or new, part of your day. Cooking, woodworking, gardening, exercising and many other activities are fun, purposeful, and help increase your standing time.



### CONNECTING WITH FRIENDS & FAMILY BY PHONE?

Stand while talking! Decide to stand up whenever you are talking on the phone. You may even choose to move the phone to a location that requires you to get up to answer it.



**SPREAD HOUSEHOLD CHORES THROUGHOUT THE DAY** It may be more efficient but doing all your chores at once can give you longer periods of idle time later to be sitting. Scheduling your jobs for different times of the day can result in less time sitting and more total time standing.

**wiha**  
Wisconsin Institute  
for Healthy Aging

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# Finding and Evaluating Online Resources

## NCCIH (nih.gov)

Routinely millions of us turn to the internet for information from checking the hours of carry-out at a restaurant, researching new appliances, to learning the latest news surrounding COVID. We have an incredible amount of information available to us whenever we want. Many of us also count on the internet for health-related issues; we investigate what the symptoms could mean, the background to a suspected ailment, and possible treatment. But how do we know that what we are reading is accurate and reliable, and how much can we trust this information? As we navigate the vast amount of online information, it is important to do so with a knowledgeable and discerning approach. Below is a guideline offered by the National Institutes of Health, the NIH, to aid you in your research.

### Vital Questions and Considerations

#### *How much do we know about online resources for complementary health approaches?*

The number of web and social media sites, along with mobile apps, offering health information about complementary and integrative health approaches (often called complementary and alternative medicine) grows every day.

#### *What do we know about the accuracy of online health information?*

Some online sources of information on complementary health approaches are useful, but others are inaccurate or misleading.

Don't rely on online resources when making decisions about your health. If you're considering a complementary health approach, discuss it with your health care provider.

### Checking Out Online Sources of Health Information: Five Quick Questions

If you're visiting an online health site for the first time or downloading a new app, ask these five questions:

1. Who runs or created the site or app? Can you trust them?
2. What is the site or app promising or offering? Do its claims seem too good to be true?
3. When was its information written or reviewed? Is it up to date?
4. Where does the information come from? Is it based on scientific research?
5. Why does the site or app exist? Is it selling something?

• **To find accurate health information, start with one of these organized collections of high-quality resources:**


- **MedlinePlus**, sponsored by the National Library of Medicine, which is part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- **healthfinder.gov**, sponsored by the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

• **If you're looking for information about complementary and integrative health approaches:**

- Use the **National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) website** as a starting point. NCCIH is the Federal Government's lead agency for scientific research on complementary and integrative health approaches.
- Follow NCCIH on **Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram**. These accounts are updated and managed by NCCIH and provide the latest resources on a variety of complementary health approaches.
- For information on dietary supplements, visit the **NIH Office of Dietary Supplements website**.
- For additional reliable resources from Federal agencies or the World Health Organization on complementary health approaches, visit NCCIH's **Links to Other Organizations page**.

**FRAUD PRESENTATIONS**

**MSN AND EOB REVIEW**

**What  SMP  
can do  
for you.**

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

**FIX ERRORS, REPORT FRAUD**