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**PRESS
RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Beware of fraudulent offers for COVID-19 testing from door-to-door, grocery store, telephone and mail order offerings— It is probably a scam!

Lawrence, MA: The Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (MA SMP) Program warns the public to be wary of anyone other than a treating physician who is offering you coronavirus testing. Be particularly suspicious of anyone offering COVID-19 testing in exchange for your Medicare number, money, or to gain access into your home. **Be careful!**

“Sadly, the scams around coronavirus testing are spreading almost as fast as the virus itself,” said Lucilia Prates-Ramos, the statewide director of the MA SMP program. “Testing can only be ordered by a treating physician. We have heard about teams in white coats are going door-to-door offering virus testing. This is NOT a valid offer. What they are really interested in is robbing the elder or stealing their identify. We have heard reports of callers pretending to be a nurse offering test results once they get a credit card number. These kinds of calls are also not for real.”

Never accept a coronavirus test from someone:

- Who comes to your door;
- Who approaches you at the grocery store or other community venue, parking lot, etc.;
- Who calls offering a mail-in test in exchange for money or Medicare number;
- Who calls to request your bank card or account information to pay for a test.

“If someone knocks at your door to offer medical testing, do not let them in,” Prates-Ramos said. “Instead, call the police immediately. Remember: Never give your Medicare number to someone you don’t know.”

If a testing kit is mailed to you, do not accept it or return it to the sender, Prates-Ramos advises.

“Keep a record of the sender’s name and the date you returned the items,” Prates-Ramos said. “Then make a note to check your Medicare Summary Notice, if you are on traditional Medicare, or your Explanation of Benefits statement, if you have a Medicare Advantage plan, to make sure Medicare did not pay for the test kit. If you have any questions, please call us.”

For details about scams related to coronavirus testing call the MA SMP Program at 800-892-0890 or visit the Federal Trade Commission website at: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/02/coronavirus-scammers-follow-headlines>

For more information on the coronavirus visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>

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The Massachusetts Senior Medicare (MA SMP) Program is a statewide partnership with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office and local law enforcement to reach and educate beneficiaries and encourage engagement in their healthcare experiences and report questionable billing, potential cases of illegal marketing, and other deceptive sales tactics. Learn more about the MA SMP Program at www.MASMP.org.

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley-North Shore (ESMV/NS) is a private, non-profit agency with a mission to ensure the health, safety and independence of older adults and persons with disabilities. We provide options for older adults that allow them the choice to remain independent at home. Elder Services is a federally designated Area Agency on Aging and state designated Aging Service Access Point and Protective Service Agency serving 28 communities. Learn more about Elder Services on our website at www.ESMV.org.