



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Organization: Legal Services of the Virgin Islands- VI Senior Medicare Patrol

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FRAUD SURROUNDING COVID-19 IS INCREASING

St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands – As the number of people and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic grows, so do the scams associated with it. Scammers use public health emergencies as opportunities for new fraud schemes, and because older adults are at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19, they may target older populations.

“There is currently no FDA-approved vaccine for COVID-19 and although there may be treatments for symptoms, there is no ‘cure.’ However, scammers often use fear-based tactics to convince people that a vaccine or cure is now being offered,” said Aimeé Griles, Project Director of the Virgin Islands Senior Medicare Patrol (VI-SMP).

It’s also important to remember that although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Virgin Islands Department of Health and other public health officials may contact you if they believe you may have been exposed to the virus, they will not need to ask you for insurance or financial information.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) recommends that Medicare beneficiaries:

- Contact your own doctor if you are experiencing potential symptoms of COVID-19.
- Do not give out your Medicare number, Social Security number, or personal information in response to unsolicited calls, texts, emails, home visits, or booths at health fairs and

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other public venues. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes as well.

- Be suspicious of anyone going door-to-door to offer free coronavirus or COVID-19 testing, supplies, or treatments.
- Carefully review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB), looking for errors or claims for products or services that weren't received.
- Follow the instructions of the Virgin Islands government officials for other actions you should be taking in response to COVID-19.
- Contact the VI-SMP for help. SMPs empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse.

The Virgin Islands Senior Medicare Patrol (VI-SMP) is ready to provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; DETECT potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and REPORT your concerns. SMPs help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also provides information and educational presentations. To locate the local Senior Medicare Patrol office, contact Aimeé Griles at 1-877-784-0228 or via email: agriles@legalservicesvi.org.

About Legal Services of the Virgin Islands, Inc.: Legal Services is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and the only entity in the U.S. Virgin Islands that provides effective, efficient, and free high-quality civil legal assistance to low income and underserved individuals in our community.

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