

(Drop-in Article on Medicare Infusion Therapy Fraud)

New Consumer Hotline to Help Stop Medicare Infusion Fraud in South Florida

Fraud costs Medicare and taxpayers billions of dollars each year and poses a threat to people's health and the health care system. The federal government has put measures in place to stop fraud by working together with Medicare beneficiaries in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is conducting a two-year demonstration project designed to protect Medicare beneficiaries in South Florida from fraudulent providers of infusion therapy or intravenous medication. This project, which began last year and is supported by the U.S. Department of Justice, brings together a multi-agency team of investigators to combat Medicare fraud by taking steps to prevent deceptive providers from operating in South Florida.

The Medicare infusion therapy scam often involves paying patients with HIV/AIDS to come to clinics or doctors' offices and then these clinics or doctors' offices bill Medicare for drug infusions or injections that these patients did not receive or did not need. This scam may also involve identity theft — where Medicare beneficiaries' and/or physicians' identities are compromised when their identification numbers are used without their knowledge or consent.

You can take action to help stop Medicare fraud. Check your Medicare Summary Notices to make sure Medicare is not charged for infusions or injections you did not receive. If you suspect a fraudulent infusion charge on your Medicare statement, call the **South Florida Medicare Infusion Fraud Hotline at 1-866-417-2078**.

HHS has several programs to help people with Medicare protect themselves against fraud. SMP (formerly known as Senior Medicare Patrol) projects, established by the Administration on Aging, educate and assist beneficiaries in protecting their Medicare information, detecting Medicare billing errors and reporting potential health care fraud and abuse. For more information, visit <http://www.smpresource.org>.

This information is provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services.