



Submitted by
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*We Help.
We Care*

OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING

120 Grandview Blvd., Gaylord, Michigan 49735

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**JOHN PANCI WILL SPEAK
AT THE JANUARY 18th
TRANSITIONS IN LIFE
FRAUD MEETING**

Don't become a victim of fraud!

The older adult population is often a target by unscrupulous individuals for various types of fraud. As part of its efforts to help and care for older adults, the Otsego County Commission on Aging (OCCOA) will host a meeting on this important topic at the University Center at Gaylord on January 18, 2011. Scheduled from 2 to 4 p.m., the meeting is the second one in the agency's four-part *Transitions in Life* series for the current program year.

The January meeting will feature two guest speakers, OCCOA Advocacy Assistant John Panci, and Trooper Jamie Voss from the Michigan State Police Gaylord Post. Panci will focus on Medicare fraud and abuse, and Trooper Voss will address the various types of fraud being committed against the older adult population in Otsego County.

\$60 billion have been lost to Medicare fraud!

Panci, who is also a counselor with MMAP (Medicaid/Medicare Assistance Program), recently received training and certification to become a Senior Medicare Patrol counselor. He noted to me, "During my training, I learned that \$60 billion have been lost due to Medicare fraud." He explained, "The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a 'grassroots' effort that seeks to cut the dollars being lost, due to fraud, by enlisting the help of the citizens that are being targeted." He continued, "My certification as an SMP counselor allows me to go out into the community to make presentations about this type of fraud in order to help Medicare/Medicaid recipients from becoming targets."

Panci emphasized, "It will be important for anyone who receives Medicaid and/or Medicare benefits to attend this meeting." He noted, "Oftentimes, it is the most-frail elderly who are targeted for this type of fraud and abuse, so it will also be important for their caregivers, guardians, and/or conservators to attend so they will know best how to protect them."

Learn how to report suspected fraud!

"Sometimes fraud is committed by unscrupulous doctors who bill for services they didn't provide," Panci noted. He added, "Not all Medicare fraud is intentional. Sometimes it is the result of an honest mistake, like a billing code error." He continued, "Older adults can help officials investigate fraud and billing errors simply by reviewing the Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) they receive after each medical appointment." He noted, "Attendees to this month's meeting will learn how to review their MSNs, and how to report possible errors or suspected fraud."

Panci shared that meeting participants will receive Medicare Appointment Calendars in which to log their medical appointments. He noted that many times patients don't have a consistent system to keep track of their appointments. "At the meeting, participants will be shown how to use their calendars to verify that the services noted on the MSNs are what they actually received."

Grassroots efforts can make a difference!

Panci pointed out, "Individuals really can make a difference. For example, from 1997 through 2008, SMP efforts have resulted in \$105.72 million in savings for taxpayers. This is all just from citizens reviewing their MSNs! For example, he explained, if a bunch of patients noticed something was not quite right on their MSNs and reported this, this would send up a red flag to officials that might lead to an investigation."

Panci shared, "The FBI is the arm of the government that investigates suspected Medicare fraud. As of 2006, there have been 588 indictments with 534 resulting in convictions, leading to a recovery of \$1.6 billion!" He emphasized, "This was only possible thanks to the grassroots efforts from our nation's citizens!"

Panci noted, "It is the taxpayers who fund the Medicare program. By taking the time to track their services and make sure they are accurately reported, program recipients can help prevent our tax dollars from being lost." He concluded, "This helps keep Medicare fiscally healthy and strong for present, as well as future generations!"

Fraud in our community will be addressed!

Trooper Voss will also be present at the meeting to talk about the various types of fraud that are being committed against older adults in our community. He will also recommend ways that citizens can avoid becoming targets and outline the steps they should take in reporting suspected cases of fraud.

PEOPLE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING THE JANUARY 18th FRAUD MEETING AT THE UNIVERSITY CENTER AT GAYLORD ARE ENCOURAGED TO REGISTER AS SEATING IS LIMITED. A DONATION OF \$5, PAYABLE AT THE DOOR, IS SUGGESTED. REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER FOR THE MEETING, OR LEARN MORE ABOUT IT, PLEASE CALL OCCOA AT 732-1122 OR LOG ONTO OUR WEBSITE, WWW.OTSEGOCOUNTYCOA.ORG.



PARTICIPANTS AT A PREVIOUS TRANSITIONS IN LIFE MEETING LEARNED ABOUT WILLS AND TRUSTS

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Fax: 989-731-2739 • occoa@occoaonline.org • Weekdays 8:00 am to Noon and 12:30 to 4:00 pm

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