

Tips to Prevent Medicare Fraud

SMP RESOURCE.ORG

01
Protect your Medicare number and medical information.



02
Learn more about Medicare's coverage rules. Contact SHIP.



03
Do not accept services you do not need - even if they are "free."



04
Be skeptical. Ask questions and use your best judgment.



<https://www.medicareinteractive.org/get-answers/medicare-fraud-and-abuse/medicare-fraud-and-abuse-overview/tips-for-preventing-fraud>
SUPPORTED BY GRANT # 90MPC0001 FROM ACL

Want More information on Fraud?

- ⇒ Watch the Utah SMP webinar with the Federal Trade Commission on the AAA Five County YouTube Channel (<https://youtu.be/AxPrDJ5g0OE>)
- ⇒ Watch the Southern Utah Seniors Conference Session about Fraud (<https://youtu.be/D0eh89fUyPo>)
- ⇒ Check out our July 27th blog post on Genetic Testing Scams (areaagencyonagingfivecounty.org/blog)

The Tip Jar

- Keep your medical bills and receipts and compare them to your Medicare Summary Notice to be sure you received all the services, supplies or equipment listed. If you see something that doesn't seem right, contact the Senior Medicare Patrol at (435) 673-3548.
- "The fraudster's greatest liability is the certainty that the fraud is too clever to be detected.." ~Louis Freeh, former FBI Director
- If you were scammed, report it to the Federal Trade Commission (reportfraud.ftc.gov)



Involved Aging: News and Announcements

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August, 2021

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Take Action to Avoid Affinity Fraud

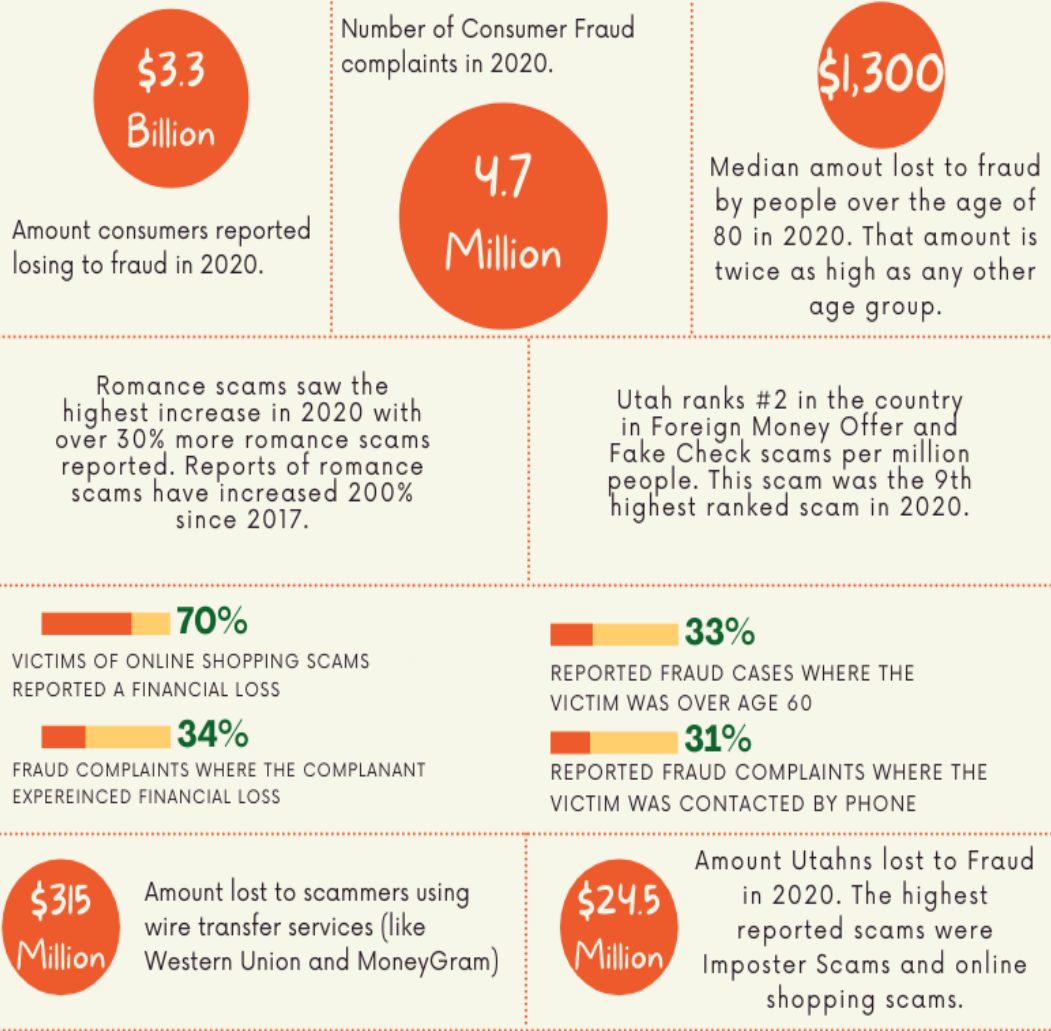
In 2012, a St. George couple was looking to invest \$250,000. Their real estate agent, a member of the couple's congregation, offered to help them invest the money. The realtor promised them returns of \$1 million in eight to ten years and because they were friends, he wouldn't charge them for the investment. But instead of investing their funds, the real estate agent spent all the money within a month. When the couple asked for a portfolio of the investments, they weren't given one but reassured that their investments were doing well. Eventually they confronted the real estate agent, who told the couple they were the ones losing out and that he wasn't going anywhere. That's when the couple went to the police. The real estate agent was charged with wire fraud and money laundering and will spend two years in federal prison.

This type of fraud, where the fraudster uses a relationship of trust to commit financial crimes, is called affinity fraud and is a major problem in the state of Utah. "Within the Utah population, there is a well-known sense of trust," said Special Agent Michael Pickett, a veteran white-collar crime investigator in the FBI's Salt Lake City Division. "Unfortunately, that trust can sometimes take the place of due diligence, and that's when individuals are more susceptible to being victimized. Trust is fine but it does not replace due diligence."

Law enforcement officials advise that before investing money, there are a few important points to keep in mind:

- Do your homework. Understand the investment and do research about the person you are investing with— even if you have an existing relationship with that individual.
- Don't make investments behind closed doors. Talk to friends, family or other financial professionals about the possible investment and be wary if you are asked not to mention the investment opportunity to others.
- If an investment sounds too good to be true— with returns that greatly outweigh the risks— be suspicious. Verify claims made using independent sources.

FRAUD FACTS



SOURCE: EXPLORE DATA | FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION (FTC.GOV)

Fraud is a major issue for all age groups, all genders, all races and all income levels. And the cost of fraud continues to rise year after year. In 2020, reported fraud amounted to \$3.3 Billion in the United States. And that doesn't include losses from the estimated 85% of fraud that goes unreported each year. Knowing the facts about fraud can help you avoid becoming a victim of fraud!



Reporting Scam calls: What and where to report

Even if you did not experience financial loss, reporting fraud can help investigators catch fraudsters and prevent future scams.

Your phone rings. You look at the screen to see who is calling and see two words, "Scam Likely," so you ignore the phone call. Later, your phone rings again, this time pulling up just a phone number you don't recognize. You decide to answer it and the voice on the other end tells you they are with Social Security and there is a problem with your benefits, asking you to confirm your Social Security number. Being scam savvy, you hang up the phone. But did you know that there is more you can do to prevent fraud?

In 2019, Americans received an estimated 63 billion spam calls but only 5.4 million calls were reported to the Federal Trade Commission. Reporting scam calls can help if legal action is taken and can help phone carriers block and label more of these calls. And the best part is reporting scam calls to the FTC is simple. You can report calls by visiting do-not-call.gov and click Report Unwanted Calls. Answering the questions takes just a few minutes and you don't have to include your personal information.

If you have given money or personal information to a scammer, reporting the scam becomes even more important. The first step is to contact the institution used to pay. The faster you do this, the more likely you are to recover your money. If you gave out your Medicare number, contact 1-800-MEDICARE or the Senior Medicare Patrol. If you gave out your Social Security number, visit identitytheft.gov to find out how to monitor your credit report. You should also report the scam at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>. Information reported here is shared with over 3,000 law enforcers and is used to investigate and bring charges against scammers. It also helps to paint a picture of scams in the United States. Also, if you experienced financial loss, make sure to report the scam to local law enforcement. They can help bring your scammer to justice and help prevent the same scam from happening to others. You can also file a report with the Utah Division of Consumer Protection at [DCP Complaints \(utah.gov\)](https://dcp.complaints.utah.gov). Reporting scams can keep you and others safe from future scams.