

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Senior Medicare Patrol Sees Cardiovascular Genetic Testing Used in New Fraud Trend

Every time there is a medical advance, there is a scammer waiting around the corner to exploit it. When genetic testing first became an important medical service, scammers targeted cancer screenings and medication metabolism (called pharmacogenetics).

The latest growing genetic testing fraud trend focuses on cardiovascular genetic testing. Scammers are offering Medicare beneficiaries genetic testing cheek swabs to obtain their Medicare information for fraudulent billing purposes or possibly medical identity theft.

“We're hearing reports of scammers calling Medicare beneficiaries, claiming their cardiologist wants them to have this test and offering to send a kit. In reality, their cardiologist did not make any such request,” said Ingrid Kunderinger, Project Manager with the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol. “Their goal is not to help the beneficiary; it is to get their Medicare information, which scammers can use to bill Medicare for medically unnecessary genetic testing.”

Here are several ways cardiovascular genetic testing is advertised:

- Cardio/cardiac genetic screening/test
- Cardiovascular genetic screening/test
- Comprehensive cardiovascular panel
- Comprehensive cardiomyopathy NSG
- Cardiovascular disease genetic kit
- Hereditary cardiovascular profile

“The repercussions of falling for a scam of this nature can be devastating. If Medicare denies a cardiovascular genetic test claim, a beneficiary might be responsible for the entire cost of the test: The average cost is \$9,000 to \$11,000,” said Kunderinger.

Cardiovascular genetic testing is covered by Medicare when the test is medically reasonable and necessary, when it is ordered by a treating physician, and when a treating physician orders the test as a diagnostic service and uses the results to manage the patient's condition.

To stop cardiovascular genetic testing fraud:

- Do not give out your personal information to anyone who calls you and claims that your cardiologist has requested cardiovascular testing.
- Do not give out your personal information or accept screening services from anyone at a community event, local fair, farmers' market, parking lot, or any other public event.
- Always read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB). The words "gene analysis," "molecular pathology," or "laboratory" may indicate questionable genetic testing claims have been submitted.
- If you received a cardiovascular genetic testing kit or test that was not medically necessary, report your concerns about billing errors or possible fraud and abuse to the Wisconsin Senior Medicare Patrol, (888) 818-2611.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is ready to provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, abuse, and errors; DETECT potential fraud, abuse, and errors; and to REPORT your concerns. SMP helps educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. SMP can also provide information and educational presentations, virtually and in-person, when it is safe for everyone.

The Wisconsin SMP is located at the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, Inc. (GWAAR). The Wisconsin SMP can be reached toll-free at (888) 818-2611, by email at [smp-wi@gwaar.org](mailto:smp-wi@gwaar.org), or online at <https://gwaar.org/senior-medicare-patrol>.