



# SMP

Senior Medicare Patrol

Preventing Medicare Fraud

# 'Care Share

## Medicare Fraud in Montana

As a person on Medicare, you can stop fraud before it can grow into the millions of dollars lost. When a provider gets away with fraud for any length of time, the Federal Government, in the form of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), or the U.S. Attorney's Office for Montana in this case, investigates. At the conclusion of the investigation, the Department of Justice would then prosecute. Then, should they successfully prosecute a provider charged with Medicare fraud, the provider is remanded to jail and expected to pay back the money generally. But usually in the form of a settlement.

If you add up the cost of the investigating, prosecuting, and incarcerating, and subtract that from the amount the government recovers, you'll see it's much more cost effective to stop them from stealing so much in the first place. Plus, we never get back everything that is stolen. It's the same reason we lock our front doors.

How can a beneficiary help? Simply by locking your front door to Medicare by reading the quarterly Medicare Summary Notice. In February a woman in Hill County attended an SMP presentation that told her to do just that. She came back the following day, after looking back through

the MSNs she hadn't read previously, to report a fraudulent claim for a provider she didn't recognize. At the SMP office in Havre they called Medicare and reported the fraud and entered the case in the national database that refers cases to the OIG.

That provider has just been charged by the U.S. Attorney's Office for Montana with conspiracy to commit wire fraud for allegedly helping facilitate about \$39 million in fraudulent billing of Medicare and other federal benefits programs during the Covid-19 pandemic. The entire case is over \$2.75 billion all told.

How many others could have read their MSNs and reported the fraud before it grew to \$39 million? We'll never know. By the time she noticed it, the investigation was well underway. The charges go back to the pandemic where he would sign prescriptions and other documents for medical devices and covid-19 tests for people who did not need them.

If you receive items your doctor didn't order or see claims on your MSNs by providers you don't recognize, please call MT SMP today at 1-800-551-3191. It happens in Montana, and you could be the one to stop it next.



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# Montana physician accused of \$39.6M Medicare fraud including COVID tests

APG staff Jul 8, 2024 Updated 19 hrs ago



A technician prepares COVID-19 coronavirus patient samples for testing at a U.S. laboratory.  
John Minchillo

A Montana physician falsely billed Medicare and other health programs to the tune of \$39.6 million and has entered into a plea agreement with prosecutors after facing a criminal charge, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for Montana.

Ronald David Dean, 64, of Whitefish, was charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud in connection with a telemedicine scheme. His prosecution is part of a federal investigation that resulted in criminal charges against 193 defendants, including other doctors, for their alleged participation in health care fraud and opioid abuse schemes. The alleged schemes, which include charging Medicare and veterans health programs for COVID tests, medical equipment, prescriptions or services that were either not necessary or never dispersed or administered, resulted in the submission of over \$2.75 billion in alleged false Medicare and other billings, according to the prosecutor's office.

"Specifically, we allege he billed for telemedicine visits that did not occur and signed orders for durable medical equipment and COVID-19 tests patients did not need, all of which resulted in over \$39 million in false billing," said U.S. Attorney Jesse Laslovich in a press release. "As this action shows, we are committed to aggressively investigating and prosecuting those who try to defraud our health care programs."

[https://www.montanarightnow.com/news/state/montana-physician-accused-of-39-6m-medicare-fraud-including-covid-tests/article\\_60f12a8f-0f9d-5a54-a38a-177731096b5f.html?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0BYgqQz6pFzz2s8z4v85HtjNu3KxJnrL2YqzGE30zoLRwT4CGgXquvmzl\\_aem\\_9Ty\\_C7QecmCrJzf\\_Z\\_cAcQ](https://www.montanarightnow.com/news/state/montana-physician-accused-of-39-6m-medicare-fraud-including-covid-tests/article_60f12a8f-0f9d-5a54-a38a-177731096b5f.html?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0BYgqQz6pFzz2s8z4v85HtjNu3KxJnrL2YqzGE30zoLRwT4CGgXquvmzl_aem_9Ty_C7QecmCrJzf_Z_cAcQ)

The Senior Medicare Patrol (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 reach Montana Senior Medicare Patrol, call 1-800-551-3191 or visit [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org).