[USE YOUR OWN LETTERHEAD, INCLUDING LOGO]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information

[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME. INCLUDE SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL.]
[INSERT CONTACT NAME]
[INSERT PHONE NUMBER]
[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]
[INSERT WEB ADDRESS]

**Fraudsters Use the Disguise of Mental Health Care for Personal Gain**

Medicare covers a variety of outpatient mental health benefits – in places such as a health care provider’s office or via telehealth, a hospital outpatient department, or a community mental health center. But fraudsters can take advantage of this type of Medicare benefit to set up sham clinics and sessions. Instead of providing needed services, they take beneficiaries out to eat, to play games, or to a room to watch TV all day.

“This isn’t mental health care. This is fraud,” said [INSERT SMP CONTACT NAME AND TITLE HERE. Be sure to also include “Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)”]. “It’s not good for the patients’ mental health or potentially their pocketbooks. Real medical professionals provide proper mental health services or refer patients to medical professionals who specialize in these services – some examples could include conducting a psychiatric evaluation, managing needed prescriptions, and performing medically necessary diagnostic tests.”

Other examples of fraud include:

* Adult daycare services being billed as individual or group psychotherapy
* Being billed for psychiatric treatment services that were not received
* Refill orders that were called in for mental health prescriptions being billed as psychiatric evaluations and/or complex office visits
* Unrelated services (such as genetic tests or back braces) that are not needed or wanted to be billed in conjunction with mental health treatment
* Medicare being billed for residential sober home, substance use disorder treatment facility, or partial hospitalization service when only outpatient counseling was received
* Being offered money or gifts in exchange for the person’s Medicare and/or Medicaid number, which is then used to bill for mental health services a person did not or do not plan to receive
* Mental health services provided by a medical assistant, massage therapist, or other unqualified individual billed as though the patient was seen by a licensed mental health professional

“Patients and/or their caregivers can stop outpatient mental health care fraud by examining their insurance statements and making sure the treatment they received and the amount they were billed are correct. If they have questions, they can call their local SMP. We can sit down with them one-on-one to go over their Medicare statements,” said [INSERT SMP CONTACT NAME].

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 locate your local Senior Medicare Patrol, contact [INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION].