

Illinois SMP Volunteer Voice

SMP Spring Fraud Prevention Fair

by Jim Sullivan, SMP Volunteer

Nancy (not her real name) is a very cautious individual. She carries two wallets with her. The first wallet contains her credit cards. That wallet she chains to her belt loop and puts in her pocket. A second wallet holds a little bit of cash but not much else. The second wallet she carries in her purse. She hopes a robber will not notice the wallet chained to her belt loop.

“If I am robbed, the wallet in my purse is the one I will give the robber or I’ll just hand him my purse. I heard they get mad if there is no money in your wallet, so I keep a \$20 bill in there. I hope the robber will see that and be satisfied! He’ll run off and leave me alone. I’m afraid that if there is no money, he’ll get frustrated and take it out on me.”

Nancy was one of the many in attendance at the SMP Fraud Prevention Fair held at the Levy Senior Center in Evanston on April 3. The fair included speakers, exhibitors and a game of Fraud Prevention Bingo. SMP volunteers and staff helped run the program. If Nancy was looking for tips on how to avoid fraud – this was the place to be!

Attendees were able to listen to speakers from a variety of organizations including Sgt. Jim Hennelly from the Cook County Sheriff’s Office, Eric Salcedo from the Illinois Attorney General’s Office and SMP Volunteer Bob Lapp.



Illinois SMP Volunteers Bob Lapp (left) and Jordan Stewart at the fair.

...continued on page 2

AgeOptions and the Illinois SMP Program

AgeOptions, the Area Agency on Aging of suburban Cook County, coordinates the SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program for the state of Illinois. AgeOptions and our partner agencies are funded by the U.S. Administration on Aging to provide outreach and education on health care fraud through the SMP program. For more information about the Illinois SMP Program, contact AgeOptions at (800)699-9043 or visit our SMP website: www.illinoismp.org.



Connecting Older Adults with
Community-based Resources and Options



Spring 2014

In this issue:

SMP Fraud Fair Highlights	1
Final Stage of NEW Policies & Procedures	3
Volunteer Spotlight	4
IL SMP Staff Profiles	6

IL SMP Staff:

Jason Echols
Health Care Consumer
Protection Coordinator

Peg Tully
Health Care Fraud
Information Specialist

Annette McClain
SMP Volunteer
Specialist

Tamara Stancil
SMP Volunteer
Specialist

SMP Spring Fraud Prevention Fair (continued from page 1)

Here are some of the highlights from the speakers at the SMP Fraud Prevention Fair:

- Medicare beneficiaries do not need to carry their Medicare card in their wallet. If you are in an emergency, hospitals are required to treat you first and get your insurance information later. The danger of carrying your Medicare card is that your Medicare number is usually your Social Security number, which is like a credit card to a scammer in health care fraud.
- Fraudsters use emotion to fleece seniors – love, fear and greed. What grandparent wouldn't respond to the late night plea of a "grandchild" needing bail after receiving a traffic ticket in a distant town? The caller often begins by saying, "Grandma, I need help." The senior inadvertently assists the fraudster by responding with the grandchild's name, "Laurie, is that you?" Now the fraudster has the senior hooked – "Yes grandma, it's Laurie, can you help me?"



SMP Volunteers who did community outreach at the Fraud Prevention Fair are: (L to R) Bob Lapp, Linda Nuneman, Jordan Stewart and Jim Sullivan.

- Seniors are often vulnerable to financial abuse because of social isolation. With no social network there is no one they can talk to about a financial "opportunity" presented to them by a stranger.
- Always be wary of requests for confidential information. Some fraudsters will call and tell a senior that his or her credit card may have been significantly overcharged, and the caller offers to make a correction but first must "verify the senior's identification" by asking for the credit card number, expiration date, etc. In this case, the senior should never respond. Hang up and call the credit card company directly to confirm the call instead.

To reinforce proper identity theft protection, participants were allowed to bring important personal documents for shredding and disposal at the fair. It is not unusual for identity thieves to sort through garbage looking for credit card statements, loan statements and any other documents that will give them the information needed to steal an individual's identity.

...continued on page 5

Final Stage of NEW Illinois SMP Policies and Procedures

If you are a volunteer with the Illinois SMP Program, you have probably noticed all the new policies and procedures we have instituted over the last year and a half. These are part of a Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) process initiated by our program's funder, the U.S. Administration for Community Living. Through this process a variety of new policies are required for all 54 SMPs nationally.

As part of VRPM, you have seen us develop and roll out a Volunteer Handbook, an Annual Review and Check-In Form, Safety Checklists for presentation sites and other procedures. The purpose of all of the new policies is to enhance the quality of the SMP program and the effectiveness and safety of SMP volunteers, partners, and the beneficiaries we reach.

We are in the process of finishing our last stage of rollout for VRPM policies and procedures, which will include full descriptions for each volunteer role we have in the Illinois SMP Program. In this last stage of VRPM, we will also focus on providing role specific trainings for our volunteers, including:

Group Education Training—for volunteers in the Exhibit/Community Outreach and Group Presentation roles

Counselor Training—for volunteers in the Counselor role

Volunteers in these roles who have not completed role specific trainings will be asked to do so by December 2014. The trainings are available online and on CD, and we may also offer in-person training if we have enough demand in a particular area. Please contact Illinois SMP Volunteer Specialist Annette McClain in the northern half of the state at (800)699-9043 and Tamara Stancil in the southern half of the state at (618)222-2561 to inquire about completing these role specific trainings.

Volunteers Please Mark Your Calendars!

Please save the following dates and times for our remaining 2014 quarterly calls for SMP volunteers:

Tuesday, July 15, 10-11 am

Tuesday, October 14, 1-2 pm

The call-in number will be given to SMP volunteers by their coordinators prior to each call date.

Volunteer Spotlight - Robb Miller at AAA for Lincolnland

by Jim Sullivan, SMP Volunteer



When Robb and Sylvia Miller of Springfield both finally retired they did what many couples do – they bought a second home. But unlike most retired couples, they did not head south; they looked to Bozeman, Montana. Their move, needless to say, was not weather related. It

was grandchildren related.

With grandchildren living near their home in Springfield, they stayed involved with their son and daughter-in-law's two girls ages 10 and 15. Their daughter, however, lived in Bozeman with her husband and three children ages 5, 7 and 9. Wanting to be more involved with the grandchildren living 1,400 miles away, they bought a second home there.

When he was graduated with his degree in English from Monmouth College in 1973, Robb did not expect to end up in law enforcement. But after working in the county jail at night to pay for his senior year, Robb began a 19-year career as a police officer and administrator.

Upon becoming the Inspector General for the Illinois Department of Public Aid (now known as the Department of Healthcare and Family Services), he spent the next eleven years combating Medicaid and welfare fraud. "During my tenure as the Inspector General, I felt a tremendous responsibility to both protect our most vulnerable citizens and our tax dollars from those who would exploit them for personal gain.

Fortunately, in both the Medicaid and Medicare programs, the vast majority of providers are honest and work hard to provide quality medical care for our beneficiaries. But you can never let down your guard." Robb commented.

Robb continued his professional education, acquiring his Master of Arts degree in law enforcement administration at Western Illinois University in 1983. He is also a graduate of the 151st session of FBI National Academy.

Robb joined SMP shortly after retiring as director of the Division of Field Operations in the Medicaid Integrity Group (MIG) of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on February 1, 2013. Clearly, his knowledge and depth of experience makes him a welcome resource for the SMP Program.

Robb works with the Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland. He plans to also volunteer for SMP in Montana.

As Robb sees it, we are at a critical junction where technology makes it possible to reach out and provide great benefits to older adults. That same technology, however, can also do great harm. With technology, the "hucksters", as Robb calls them, can also reach out to older people and take advantage of them.

...continued on page 5

SMP Spring Fraud Prevention Fair (*continued from page 2*)

A number of exhibitors attended the SMP Fraud Prevention Fair to answer questions and provide educational material. The FBI was represented (exhibiting a bullet proof vest) along with investigators from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS OIG). In addition, the Cook County Sheriff, Evanston Police Department and the Office of the Illinois Attorney General all sent representatives.

Attendees at the fair had many opportunities to learn a lot about protecting themselves from fraud by visiting the various tables of information and talking to the representatives about specific issues and scenarios.

Volunteer Spotlight - Robb Miller at AAA for Lincolnland (*continued from page 4*)

Robb uses his experience to add real-life stories to his SMP presentations. When he entered the health care fraud arena, he was reminded of advice he received from a fellow law enforcement officer that he shares with his SMP audiences. That advice is: “Crooked providers spend every waking moment thinking of ways to lie, cheat and steal. The government has to use its resources more effectively, particularly through data analysis. But it is also important to know we can count on honest beneficiaries to alert us to potential fraud as well.”

Rob has spent his career doing public speaking on issues of health care fraud and enjoys the opportunity to draw upon his experience when presenting to Medicare beneficiaries. He encourages other retirees to get involved with SMP and not to worry if their experience with Medicare is limited. The basic knowledge can be picked up through SMP training - training Robb took, despite his years of experience.

Get to Know Our Illinois SMP Staff



Annette McClain

As the *SMP Volunteer Specialist* for the northern part of the state, Annette works at AgeOptions in Oak Park. She works closely with volunteers throughout their screening process and with

coordinators from SMP partner agencies to support their volunteer efforts. Annette directly coordinates eight SMP volunteers out of the AgeOptions office. In her spare time, Annette loves to write fiction and cook for family and friends.



Tamara Stancil

As the *SMP Volunteer Specialist* for the southern part of the state, Tamara works at the Area Agency on Aging of Southwestern Illinois in Belleville. She guides new volunteers through the screening process

as well as leading the SMP Foundations Training. She also works with the SMP Partners as a liaison between volunteers and coordinators. Tamara coordinates the quarterly SMP Volunteer Calls. Besides being a busy mom to her three girls ages 11, 8 and 1, Tamara likes going to yard sales and trying new restaurants.



Jason Echols

Jason is the *Health Care Consumer Protection Coordinator* at AgeOptions, and in that role, he serves as the statewide SMP coordinator for Illinois.

Working with our 17 SMP partner agencies, Jason

oversees, supports and monitors their SMP work, including their outreach and volunteer management efforts. He also writes and sends the biweekly Fraud Alert emails. Outside of the office, Jason enjoys baking for friends and coworkers and trying new things, like learning to play the guitar.



Peggy Tully

As the *Health Care Fraud Information Specialist* at AgeOptions, Peggy responds to calls from SMP clients and files client complaints with Medicare and law enforcement as necessary. In working with SMP partners to

accurately report data, Peggy tracks and records outreach efforts in the SMP database, generates reports, and watches for trends. She also helps create new SMP outreach materials. Peggy loves to golf and spend time with family and friends.

The mission of the Illinois SMP is to empower Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries to prevent, detect and report error, fraud and abuse in the Medicare and Medicaid programs through community outreach and education.



1048 Lake Street, Suite 300

Oak Park, Illinois 60301

Phone: (800)699-9043

Fax: (708)524-0870

www.ageoptions.org