

# COMBAT OPIOID MISUSE AND ABUSE.

In 2017, the Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid epidemic a public health crisis. While opioids can be useful in treating acute pain, they can be highly addictive with use over a long period of time. Older adults taking opioids along with other prescribed medications need to be mindful of interactions to prevent dangerous side effects.

## WHAT IS AN OPIOID?

Opioids include prescription pain medications (painkillers) such as: tramadol, codeine, fentanyl, hydrocodone, morphine, oxycodone, and more.



## COMMON SCAM EXAMPLE

A beneficiary's Medicare number has been stolen or compromised. The number is then sold to unscrupulous prescribers who order opioid prescriptions under the beneficiary's name and then sell these drugs illegally for profit.

### Remember fraud and abuse occurs when:

- Medicare beneficiaries are **over-prescribed medications**.
- Pharmacies are involved in "**drug diversion**" which is when a pharmacy takes a drug that was legally prescribed to one person and gives it to another person for recreational use.
- Medicare is billed for medications **you were not prescribed**.
- Medicare is billed for medications **you did not receive**.

## PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

-  Review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) for any suspicious activity.
-  If you see anything suspicious, call Illinois SMP at **(800)699-9043**.
-  Discuss non-opioid alternatives for treating chronic pain with your doctor.
-  Properly dispose of opioid medications after treatment is finished. There are local drug take back locations where you can dispose of unused medications.
-  To prevent drug misuse, do not share your prescription drugs with others.

The Illinois SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program educates consumers about health care fraud, waste, and abuse. If you have questions about a claim on your Medicare Summary Notice or Explanation of Benefits, call the Illinois SMP program at **1(800)699-9043**.