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Qucik Action Takes Down Scammer

FEBRUARY 04TH 2013 BY DEE LOFLIN

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News Release from The Missouri SMP
Ruth Dockins

Recently an SMP (Senior Medicare patrol) volunteer was key to the apprehension of a female scam artist preying on a senior living community, going door-to-door posing as an official representative doing wellness checks. She flashed a green piece of paper saying it was her identification. The lady asked beneficiaries about their personal health, what drugs they were taking, to walk a short distance, and a few other things. But the time she left the community, she had talked to at least two residents and stolen one's wallet. Once the beneficiary called to cancel his credit card which was in his wallet, it was already too late. The scammer had used the card to buy gas and items at a local store.

The beneficiary reported the crime to the SMP volunteer that lived in his community. The volunteer immediately sent out an e-bulletin to her community and contacted the local SMP office. In another community not far away, the same lady was scamming other beneficiaries. This time a beneficiary contacted the local area agency on aging. The area agency on aging referred it to their local SMP office. Once they realized this was a potential crime spree, they got the word out through the media to inform the community of the wellness scam.

The story caught the attention of a reporter from the local ABC affiliate and she wanted to tell the story. The SMP volunteer was interviewed along with the SMP Director for the area and the story aired shortly after. It caught the attention of the local authorities and

the culprit was apprehended.

This case is an excellent example of the importance of SMP volunteers being the eyes and ears of the program. The SMP volunteer in this situation where to report the incident and got the message out quickly to the community residents. A reporter seeing the story's worth resulted in a community alert that saved other seniors from being victimized.

What is the Missouri SMP?

SMP's help Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries prevent, detect and report health care fraud. They not only protect older persons they also preserve the integrity of these programs. Because this work often requires face-to-face contact to be most effective, SMP's nationwide rely on approximately 5,000 active volunteers to help in this effort.

If you are interested in becoming an SMP volunteer or if you have questions or concerns please contact The Missouri SMP at 1-888-515-6565 to learn more.

The Missouri SMP is funded through a grant from the Administration on Aging, US Department of Health and Human Services.

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