



**For Immediate Release: January 18, 2012**

## ***Help Reduce Health Care Fraud***

### **Senior Medicare Patrol Volunteers Needed Now**

Estimates of the costs involved in health care fraud range in the billions of dollars. The goal of the Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging's SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program is to reduce fraud and abuse in the Medicare system. Volunteers are the heart of the SMP Program as it capitalizes on the wealth of experience that seniors and other volunteers have to offer. SMP volunteers act as liaisons in the Medicare beneficiary community by empowering caregivers and seniors to identify, prevent, and report instances of Medicare fraud.

Nationally, SMP volunteers and SMP staff have documented a successful track record; and more importantly, consumers are receiving much needed information and support to be their own advocates and protect themselves from fraud and abuse.

Volunteers can actively engage with the Virginia SMP Program by assisting the Project Manager and the local area agencies on aging with community outreach and education activities throughout the state. SMP Volunteers in Virginia liaison with caregivers and seniors by

- 1-distributing information in the community (Community Advocate);
- 2-making presentations to selected groups in the community (Community Educator); and
- 3-identifying and coordinating appropriate groups in the community for informational distribution and educational presentations by volunteers (Community Coordinator).

Volunteers have the opportunity to gain knowledge about Medicare benefits and current scams, help others prevent and detect fraud and abuse, and protect taxpayer dollars.

The Virginia Association of Area Agencies on Aging has scheduled an all day volunteer training for February 3, 2012, in Front Royal. While senior citizens in the counties of Warren, Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, and Page are especially encouraged to volunteer, anyone 18 and over with an interest in the program is invited to apply. The deadline for training registration is January 27.

**Contact: Nancy Siford, Volunteer Coordinator**  
**nsiford@thev4a.org**  
**804-565-1603**  
**www.virginiasmpp.org**

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