

PrimePartners

for Case Managers

SPECIAL EDITION



COVID-19 Scams: Help Spread the Facts

A key component of *PrimePartners* is keeping you informed of issues affecting our communities and our members. In this time of uncertainty, with the “new normal” changing almost daily, one area of concern is COVID-19-related scams. Given the prevalence of these scams, we are sending this special edition to make sure you are aware of the issue, and we ask you to pass on this information to members you work with.

Common scams

In a time of so many questions, it can be tempting to reach for anything that may provide an answer. Scammers are targeting people in a number of ways, including telemarketing calls, text messages, social media posts, and even door-to-door visits (HHS). An example of a common scam is the offer of a test kit in exchange for personal information (such as Medical Assistance [Medicaid] and/or Medicare information). The scammer then uses these details to bill false medical claims. Additional scams have been reported related to cures, relief funds, work-from-home opportunities, student loan forgiveness, and debt consolidation offers (FCC).

Tips

Although the types of scams are always changing, please encourage members to keep the following tips in mind:

- Do not share personal, medical, or financial information over the phone or through text or email (HHS OIG). Let members know that PrimeWest Health will never call to ask for this kind of information. Neither will government agencies (FCC).
- Beware of any unexpected calls, messages, or visitors offering COVID-19 tests or supplies. Once personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.
- Ignore offers or advertisements for COVID-19 testing or treatment on social media.
- A doctor or other health care provider should assess your condition and approve any requests for COVID-19 testing (HHS OIG).

Encourage members to be vigilant with their information and to pay attention to what they share and with whom they share it. Remind them that scammers are tricky and can “spoof” a phone number to make calls appear local or as though they are coming from a government entity such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (FCC).

Help

It can be tough to know what is true and what isn't. Let members know that PrimeWest Health is here to help. If there are questions about offers or services relating to COVID-19, members can always call PrimeWest Health Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free) or our Compliance Hotline at **1-866-763-2958** (toll free).

Thank you for sharing this information. It's more important than ever to stay educated and to stay safe!

Sources:

- Federal Communications Commission (FCC), “COVID-19 Consumer Warnings and Safety Tips,” April 8, 2020, www.fcc.gov/covid-scams.
- United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (HHS OIG), “Fraud Alert: COVID-19 Scams,” March 23, 2020, www.oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus/fraud-alert-covid19.asp. 