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NEWS RELEASE

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Wisconsin SMP to Hold Volunteer Training in West Allis

Wisconsin SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol), a project of the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, will hold a volunteer training on Wednesday, October 24, 2012 at the West Allis Senior Center, 7001 West National Avenue, in West Allis from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. This session is for individuals interested in learning how to protect themselves from Medicare fraud and volunteering to educate other seniors how to prevent healthcare fraud.

SMP volunteers are concerned citizens (often retired professionals) who empower seniors to prevent healthcare fraud through outreach and education. The Wisconsin SMP Volunteer Training is an in-depth workshop that provides participants with a foundation of knowledge in three main areas: the SMP program, Medicare basics, and Medicare fraud, waste, and abuse. After they are trained, SMP volunteers make presentations to groups and/or distribute materials at community events to educate Medicare beneficiaries, caregivers, and professionals how to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse.

Healthcare fraud is a big problem in the United States. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has designated Medicare and Medicaid as high-risk programs because they are particularly vulnerable to fraud, waste, and abuse. GAO, an independent agency that investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars, estimated that these two programs made more than \$64 billion in improper payments (payments that should not have been made or were made in an incorrect amount) in fiscal year 2011. Since 1997, Wisconsin SMP volunteers have worked in communities throughout the state to educate Medicare beneficiaries, family members, and caregivers about the importance of protecting their personal information, reviewing their Medicare notices to identify billing errors and potentially fraudulent activity, and reporting suspected fraud, waste, and abuse.

For more information about this training, please contact Kevin Brown, Wisconsin SMP Grant Manager/Trainer at (800) 488-2596, Ext. 315 or kbrown@cwag.org. Pre-registration is required. Additional information about the Wisconsin SMP project is available at www.wisconsinsmp.org.