

FRAUD

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD AND ABUSE IN ESSEX COUNTY:

Public Assistance programs like Medicaid are a vital source of help for many Essex County residents who need and deserve assistance. Unfortunately, there are those who take advantage of these programs and the people they serve by intentionally obtaining money and services, for which, they are not entitled.

WHAT IS PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD AND ABUSE:

Fraud and abuse are any intentional actions that result in a recipient or provider receiving benefits or payments to which they are not entitled.

PROGRAMS IMPACTED BY FRAUD AND ABUSE:

- Medicaid
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Safety Net
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Day Care
- Child Support
- Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

Medicaid and Public Assistance fraud is a serious crime that can result in imprisonment, probation, civil penalties, restitution and can render someone ineligible for benefits for a certain length of time.

EXAMPLES OF RECIPIENT FRAUD:

- Giving your EBT card to another in exchange for money, a controlled substance, or for the purpose of committing an unlawful act (Trafficking).
- Providing false or incomplete information to the Department of Social Services at either the application or the recertification phase.
- Falsely reporting that a parent is absent from the household.
- Falsely reporting that a child is in the household.
- Listing a non-relative as a family member in order to obtain benefits.
- Intentionally failing to report a change in the household composition.
- Intentionally failing to report earnings from employment or monies received from unemployment, disability, or social security.
- Intentionally failing to disclose assets, including bank accounts and real estate.

- Submitting false or fraudulent documents to the Department of Social Services in order to get benefits.
- Using someone else's benefits card to obtain treatment, services or benefits.
- Claiming coverage for treatments, services or supplies not received.
- Forging or altering a prescription.
- “*Doctor Shopping*” to obtain unnecessary prescription medications or durable medical equipment and then selling these items for a profit.

PROVIDER FRAUD:

Types of Providers: Includes physicians, dentists, pharmacists, home care providers, mental health providers, durable medical equipment suppliers, ambulance companies, medical transportation companies, hospitals, nursing homes and day care providers.

Examples of Provider Fraud:

- Billing for nonexistent or unnecessary medical services, such as x-rays, laboratory tests or drugs that were never dispensed.
- Billing for more expensive products or labor-intensive services than were provided.
- Paying kickbacks or providing gifts and other incentives to third parties in exchange for business or referrals to a particular doctor or hospital.
- Inflating of claimed mileage by transportation companies in order to receive greater reimbursement.
- Billing Medicaid for transportation to non-Medicaid services.
- Billing an insurance carrier or patient for the cost of a name brand prescription when a lower costing generic substitute or an over-the-counter drug was instead supplied.
- Deliberately applying for duplicate reimbursement – “*double billing*”.
- Billing for more days in a hospital or nursing home than the patient actually stayed.
- Billing services for patients who have died.
- Billing related services separately to charge a higher amount than if services were combined and billed as one service.
- Billing for used items as new items by durable medical equipment companies.
- Continuing to send recipients medical supplies when it is no longer medically necessary.

WHAT IS ESSEX COUNTY DOING TO HELP COMBAT FRAUD AND ABUSE:

Essex County is committed to protecting the quality and integrity of the County's Public Assistance Programs. Our Fraud Investigations Unit is actively pursuing fraud and abuse throughout the various programs offered within our County. Our Fraud Department works closely in conjunction with the Essex County Sheriff's Office and the Essex County District

Attorney's Office to detect, prevent and deter fraud and abuse within Essex County. As a team, they work to prosecute those individuals and providers who defraud or abuse the assistance system.

TIPS FOR REPORTING MEDICAID AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FRAUD:

Public assistance programs, like Medicaid, Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, Day Care and HEAP are all vital resources for many of our residents. However, waste, fraud, and abuse in these programs can cost YOU millions of taxpayer dollars each year and shortchange those who need and deserve our help.

Please help us fight those who defraud and abuse these programs. If you know of any provider, business or person engaged in questionable practices involving public assistance programs, let us know. Working together, we can make a difference.

HOW TO CONTACT US TO REPORT FRAUD AND ABUSE

Fraud and abuse of public programs affect all of us. Everyone can take responsibility for reporting suspected fraud and abuse. If you have reason to believe that someone is abusing a public assistance program, you should report it. ****The source of all fraud and abuse complaints are kept strictly confidential****

Download, print, and submit a Complaint Form via mail to:

Essex County Social Services

ATTN: Fraud Investigations Unit

P.O. Box 217

Elizabethtown, NY 12932

Fax completed complaint form to: 518-873-3472

Or simply file a complaint/report to our Fraud Investigations Unit directly via phone at:

(518) 873-3636 or (518) 873-3638.