

## OIG Issues Alert to Warn of ‘Free’ Genetic Testing Scams Seeking to Steal Information

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On June 3, 2019, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued a fraud alert to notify consumers about genetic testing fraud schemes (the [Alert](#)). According to the OIG, fraudulent actors are using the provision of free genetic testing kits to obtain Medicare information from unwitting consumers, and then using the stolen information for purposes of fraudulent billing and/or identity theft.

In the Alert, OIG advises consumers to protect themselves by:

- Not accepting mailed genetic testing kits unless ordered by a physician;
- Closely scrutinizing any request for Medicare information tied to the offer of free genetic testing;
- Verifying that your physician approves any requests for genetic testing; and
- Not providing Medicare information to anyone other than a provider’s office.

That the OIG felt compelled to issue the Alert indicates its level of concern with fraudulent scams perpetrated under the guise of free genetic testing. It is not surprising that as genetic testing advances and the options for such testing proliferate, scammers are seeking to take advantage. The Alert, therefore, provides a welcome reminder to consumers to closely guard Medicare and other personal information. Health care providers and plans would be well-advised to review the Alert and notify their patients about the rising incidence of this scheme.

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