



You Can Help Protect Yourself and Medicare from Fraud Committed by Dishonest Suppliers

Medicare fraud can happen in a number of ways. One way is when a supplier who isn't approved by Medicare asks for your business. It can also happen if your supplier gives false or misleading information to you, or to Medicare, to get payment for equipment that isn't medically necessary. This includes having Medicare pay for more advanced equipment than you need. Medicare fraud wastes a lot of money every year. The result is higher health care costs for you and that the equipment you're sold may not be right for your diagnosis and treatment. You can help by making sure that your supplier is Medicare-approved (accredited) and that they provide you with the equipment that best fits your medical needs.

Identity theft is another form of Medicare fraud. It happens when someone uses your personal information without your consent to get medical services or equipment. Personal information includes things like your name, Social Security, Medicare, or credit card numbers. Keep this information safe. Don't give your information to anyone who comes to your home (or calls you) uninvited selling Medicare-related products. **Only give personal information to doctors or other providers who are approved by Medicare, your State Health Insurance Assistance Program, or Social Security.** Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) if you aren't sure if a provider is approved by Medicare. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

How to Spot Fraud and Abuse

You can help protect yourself and Medicare by looking out for the following:

- Suppliers who offer you free equipment
- Suppliers who want you to use their doctors
- Anyone you don't know asking for your Medicare or Social Security Number
- Calls from companies you didn't give your phone number to
- Charges for products or services you didn't get on your Medicare Summary Notice



What to do if You Suspect Fraud and Abuse

If you suspect fraud or abuse, you can do the following:

- Call your health care provider to ask about the charge or service in question.
- Confirm that your supplier is still a Medicare-approved (accredited) supplier. New guidelines recently went into effect, so it's important to make sure your supplier is still approved by Medicare. You can do this by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can also visit www.medicare.gov and select "Find Suppliers of Medical Equipment in Your Area."
- If you think that someone is using your personal information, or if you suspect Medicare fraud, call your local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) office. The Administration on Aging's SMP programs can teach you how to protect your Medicare information, detect billing discrepancies, and report suspected errors, fraud, and abuse. To find your local SMP program, visit www.smpresource.org and select the SMP Locator.
- Call the Inspector General's hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

For More Information

For more information, visit www.medicare.gov, or call 1-800-MEDICARE.