



Durable Medical Equipment Fraud

Tips for Protecting Yourself and Medicare

Medicare spends \$8.4 billion each year on durable medical equipment. Of the billions spent, at least **\$700 million** is estimated to be wasted. Some of that waste is due to fraud.

Medicare fraud results in higher costs for everyone — including you. The good news: YOU can help reduce durable medical equipment fraud. Reducing fraud cuts costs and increases the quality of care for those who need it.

What Is Durable Medical Equipment?

Durable medical equipment, or “DME,” is medical equipment prescribed by your doctor that is reusable. It includes hospital beds, walkers, home oxygen equipment, wheelchairs, and scooters.

Medicare only covers DME if you get it from a supplier enrolled in the Medicare program. Medicare only covers 80% of their approved amount for an item.



What Are Examples of DME Fraud?

- Suppliers who offer “free” equipment but bill Medicare
- Suppliers who want you to use their doctors (not yours), who then prescribe unnecessary medical equipment
- Suppliers or doctors who provide medical equipment or supplies you never requested
- Suppliers or doctors who charge for items you never received
- Suppliers who bill for people who have passed away
- Suppliers who request your Medicare number at a presentation, during a sales pitch, or in an unsolicited phone call

- Beneficiaries who willingly allow their Medicare number to be used in exchange for money, gifts, or unnecessary equipment and supplies
- Suppliers who deliver an off-the-shelf product but bill Medicare for a more costly product

What Can You Do To Stop DME Fraud?

- Be sure your doctor has seen you in person and orders the equipment or supplies.
- Never sign a blank form from your health care provider or equipment supplier.
- If you rent and return medical equipment, always get a dated receipt.
- Always read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB). Look for charges for equipment you do not need or did not receive.
- Protect your Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security cards like credit cards.
- Refuse and report anything offered for “free,” like equipment or supplies, in exchange for your Medicare number.
- Do not accept services from strangers who call or knock on your door.
- Report your concerns about billing mistakes or possible fraud and abuse to your local SMP.

Call Your Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP): 1-800-247-4422

Your local SMP is ready to provide you with the information you need to **PROTECT** yourself from Medicare error, fraud, and abuse; **DETECT** potential error, fraud, and abuse; and **REPORT** your concerns. SMPs and their trained volunteers help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also provides information and educational presentations.



*Funded by the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Administration on Aging (AoA),
Grant Number 90NP0001*