



Protect, Detect, Report

Home Health Care Fraud

Tips for Protecting Yourself and Medicare

Home health care services are provided by nurses and other therapists who come to your home. Medicare spends \$18.6 billion a year on these services.

To keep fraud out of home health care, Medicare has strict rules for home health agencies. This not only protects Medicare, but it protects you from receiving care from questionable providers. You may be particularly vulnerable when you are at home and not in a supervised health care setting.



What Are Examples of Home Health Care Fraud?

- ✓ Billing for patients who do not meet Medicare's definition of "homebound"
- ✓ Billing for services that are not medically necessary
- ✓ Billing for services or visits that were not provided
- ✓ Offering incentives to doctors to falsely certify someone as homebound
- ✓ Billing for housekeeping as skilled nursing or other therapy
- ✓ Offering things such as **free** groceries or a free ride in exchange for your Medicare number
- ✓ Offering things such as **free** groceries or a free ride if you switch to a particular home health agency
- ✓ Charging a copayment for home health services
- ✓ Asking beneficiaries to sign forms verifying that Medicare home health services were provided, even though none were
- ✓ Beneficiaries who accept cash or gifts in exchange for going along with a home health scam

Protect Yourself & Medicare from Home Health Fraud

- Protect your Medicare card, Medicaid card, and Social Security card like a credit card.
- Refuse anything offered for “free” in exchange for your Medicare number.
- Do not accept services from strangers who call or knock on your door.
- Check with your doctor. Be sure your doctor has seen you in person and certifies that you are unable to leave your home to obtain the care or therapy.
- Be suspicious of anyone offering to provide services billed to Medicare but not related to a plan of care approved by a doctor.
- Never sign a blank form from your home health provider.
- Understand your Medicare home health benefits:
 - Contact your local SHIP program
 - Contact 1-800-Medicare
- Medicaid programs often cover in-home services that aren’t covered under Medicare
 - If you are receiving home health through Medicaid, contact your Medicaid office to understand your benefits.
- Report your concerns about billing mistakes or possible fraud to Medicare or 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.



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