



**SCAM
ALERT**

Aging and Adult Services

DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT SCAM

Scam predators are aiming this scam at seniors and disabled adults. You may receive a call stating you qualify for free equipment totally paid for by Medicare, such as a back or leg brace. The caller may impersonate a Medicare representative or the company who makes the equipment. The caller may repeatedly call you until you agree to accept the offer or they may submit an order to your doctor without your permission. Equipment may just show up at your door and you may have a very difficult time attempting to return it!

The Social Security Act Section § 1834 (17)(A) contains language that prohibits Durable Medical Equipment (DME) suppliers from making unsolicited calls to Medicare beneficiaries, unless one of the three (3) specific exceptions exist that include when the supplier:

1. Has the written permission of the Medicare beneficiary,
2. Is following up on previously provided medical equipment, or
3. Has provided at least one covered item to the beneficiary within the 15 months prior.

If you receive one of these calls and an exception does not exist, the scam predator is committing Medicare fraud. Just hang up!

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) recommend the following to avoid this type of scam:

- Refuse and report anyone offering free equipment, supplies or services in exchange for your Medicare number.
- Know that Medicare medical suppliers are not allowed to make unsolicited calls or emails.
- Never sign a blank form from your health care provider or equipment supplier.
- Always read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) to look for any charges for equipment or services you do not need or did not receive.
- Protect your personally identifiable information, including your Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security cards; keep them in a safe place to use when you go to see your health care provider.

Note: You may report scam predators to the BBB, FTC, Adult Protective Services (APS), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3).

If you think you may be a victim of a scam, contact
San Bernardino County APS
at **1-(877) 565-2020**, or your local police department.