

California Senior Medicare Patrol

Medicare Fraud Alert

July 2014

Beware of Providers and Suppliers Who Advertise Free Services

We're getting several reports of fraudulent providers and durable medical equipment (DME) suppliers who are offering beneficiaries "free" services or equipment in exchange for their Medicare numbers. "Free" is the red flag. If the services or treatments were truly free, no Medicare number would be needed. Fraudsters ask for these numbers because they bill Medicare directly for services and equipment beneficiaries don't ever receive, or they sell these numbers to other crooks.

Some things to watch for:

- **Beware of people who say they know how to get Medicare to pay for something.** Medicare pays for services and items based on medical necessity -- meaning a service or item you really need for your medical condition. Also, most durable medical equipment requires a prescription from your doctor.
- **Beware of phone scams where callers claim to be from Medicare, Social Security, the IRS or other government entity and ask for your Medicare number or other personal information.** These entities won't call you. They already have your Medicare number and will not ask you for it or other personal information.

If you or someone you know comes across such scams, let us know.

Together we can stop fraud! Call the [Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program \(HICAP\)](#) at 1-800-434-0222, or the [Senior Medicare Patrol](#) at 1-855-613-7080.

Visit: cahealthadvocates.org.

Thank You!

