



Preventing Medicare Fraud

April 2024

# 'Care Share

## Consumer Alert: Urinary Catheter Scams

### CONSUMER ALERT

### Urinary Catheter Scams

**SCAMMERS** are targeting Medicare enrollees by offering free services, medical equipment, or gifts cards in order to obtain their Medicare number to commit fraud.



Scammers target Medicare enrollees through various communication methods to obtain enrollee's personal information.



Scammers steal or obtain Medicare numbers and other personal information.



Scammers then bill Medicare for medical equipment that's unnecessary or not provided.

**REPORT FRAUD: TIPS.HHS.GOV | 1-800-447-8477**

OIG.HHS.GOV

Scammers are targeting Medicare enrollees through phone calls, internet ads, and text messages with offers of free services, medical equipment, or gift cards upon confirming their personal information and eligibility for specific Medicare services. Often, the enticement for the individual is that they are "qualified" for items "at no cost" or "free." Once the scammers obtain the enrollee's personal information, monthly billing to Medicare will begin for medically unnecessary urinary catheters that may or may not actually be sent to the enrollee.



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Typically, the scheme begins with a contact from an unscrupulous DME company claiming they work for Medicare or are calling on behalf of Medicare. Their goal is to obtain the enrollee's Medicare number.

Usually, the DME company will obtain its own authorizing provider, who does not know or have a relationship with the enrollee, to sign an authorization for DME. Occasionally, the DME company may get the enrollee's provider to sign an authorization for the DME.

HHS-OIG is asking the public to stay alert and report any potentially fraudulent activity along these lines to the [HHS-OIG Hotline](#) (1-800-HHS-TIPS). Through tips and complaints, HHS-OIG can document instances of fraud and take the necessary steps to protect enrollees and Federal health care programs like Medicare.

### Protect Yourself

- If you receive a call from someone offering you free urinary catheters or other Durable Medical Equipment and services that will be billed to Medicare, hang up immediately.
- Be suspicious of anyone who offers you free medical equipment and then requests your Medicare number. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.
- If medical equipment is delivered to you, don't accept it unless it was ordered by your physician. Refuse the delivery or return it to the sender. Keep a record of the sender's name and the date you returned the items.

- Review any Explanation of Benefits documents you receive. Scan for any supplies you did not order.
- Medicare enrollees should be cautious of unsolicited requests for Medicare numbers. No one other than your provider's office should ever request your Medicare information. There is no other circumstance when it is appropriate or safe to provide it.
- If you suspect Medicare fraud, [report it immediately online](#) or call the HHS-OIG Hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477).

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*Last updated March 6, 2024*

Montana SMP confirms this scam, as well as others, are currently making the rounds in Montana.

Medicare and "Medicare Providers" are not calling people. Medicare is not "updating" your Medicare card with a chip or a plastic card.

If you receive an unsolicited call, please do not give out your personal information. If someone asks you to "verify" your Medicare number or address, don't.

**READ YOUR MEDICARE SUMMARY NOTICES and call MT SMP if you notice anything out of the ordinary. 1-800-551-3191.**

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is ready to provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; DETECT potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and REPORT your concerns. SMPs 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. To reach Montana Senior Medicare Patrol, call 1-800-551-3191 or visit [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org).