

# Medicare Fraud and Abuse

**M**edicare fraud steals millions of dollars every year from the Medicare program. Beneficiaries pay for it with higher premiums. Fraud occurs when someone knowingly deceives or misrepresents themselves in a way that could result in unauthorized payments being made. Fraud schemes may be carried out by individuals, institutions, or groups of individuals.

Medicare fraud includes, but is not limited to:

- × Billing for more expensive services at a higher service fee than was actually provided.
- × Billing for services not furnished.
- × Falsifying certificates of medical necessity, plans of treatment, and medical records to justify payment.
- × Soliciting, offering, or receiving a kickback.
- × Billing separately for services that should be included in a single service fee.
- × Misrepresenting the diagnosis to justify payment.

Medicare is improving its capability to crack down on those who take advantage of this program. We are using four methods to fight fraud and abuse: prevention, early detection, coordination with other government agencies, and prosecution of wrongdoers.

We need your help to stop Medicare fraud and abuse. You can help protect Medicare and yourself by reporting all suspected instances of fraud and abuse. When you receive payment notices from Medicare, review them for errors. Make sure Medicare did not pay for services, medical supplies, or equipment that you did not receive.

## Reporting Medicare Fraud and Abuse

If you have a questionable charge on your bill, call the provider, your Fiscal Intermediary (for Part A bills) or your Medicare carrier (for Part B bills). If you believe that a health care provider may be cheating or abusing the Medicare program, call the Medicare carrier or intermediary that sent you the payment notice. Their name, address, and telephone number appear on the payment notice. After you call the Medicare carrier or Fiscal Intermediary, you may also call the Inspector General's hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477), or TTY for the hearing and speech impaired: 1-800-377-4950.



# Protect Yourself Against Health Care Fraud

## Fraud Tips:

- × Never give your Medicare or Medicaid number over the telephone or to people you do not know.
- × Beware of health care providers and suppliers that use telephone calls and door-to-door selling as a way to sell you goods or services.
- × Be suspicious of companies that offer free medical equipment or offer to waive your co-payment without first asking about your ability to pay.
- × Beware of health care providers who say they represent Medicare or a branch of the Federal government, or providers who use pressure tactics to get you to accept a service or product.

## You should be suspicious if the provider tells you that:

- × The test is free; he only needs your Medicare number for his records.
- × Medicare wants you to have the item or service.
- × They know how to get Medicare to pay for it.
- × The more tests they provide, the cheaper they are.
- × The equipment or service is free; it won't cost you anything.

## Be suspicious of...

- × Home health providers that offer non-medical transportation services or housekeeping as Medicare approved services.
- × Ambulance companies that bill Medicare for non-emergency trips.
- × Suppliers that bill Medicare for medical equipment for beneficiaries in a nursing home.
- × Physicians that give the wrong diagnosis on the claim form so Medicare will pay.