Durable Medical Equipment Fraud

Tips for Protecting Yourself and Your Medicare

Medicare Part B covers medically necessary durable medical equipment, or “DME,” that is prescribed by your doctor, can withstand repeated use, serves a medical purpose, and can be used in the home. Medicare only covers DME if you get it from a supplier enrolled in the Medicare program. Medicare Part B pays 80% of the approved amount and you pay the other 20%.

What Does Medicare Cover in Relation to DME, Orthotics, and Prosthetics?

- DME that Medicare covers includes, but is not limited, to:
  - Blood sugar monitors and test strips, canes, continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) devices, crutches, hospital beds, infusion pumps and supplies, oxygen equipment and accessories, patient lifts, walkers, wheelchairs, and scooters
- Prefabricated orthotics that Medicare covers include, but are not limited, to:
  - Shoulder, knee, back, wrist, and ankle braces
- Prosthetic devices that Medicare covers include, but are not limited, to:
  - Breast prostheses (including a surgical bra), one pair of conventional eyeglasses or contact lenses provided after a cataract operation, ostomy bags and certain related supplies, some surgically implanted prosthetic devices (including cochlear implants), and urological supplies

Examples of Durable Medical Equipment Fraud Schemes

- Suppliers who offer “free” equipment but bill Medicare.
- Suppliers who want you to use their doctors (not yours), who then prescribe unnecessary medical equipment.
- Suppliers or doctors who provide medical equipment or supplies you never requested.
- Suppliers or doctors who charge for items you never received.
- Suppliers who bill for people who have passed away.
- Suppliers who request your Medicare number at a presentation, during a sales pitch, or in an unsolicited phone call.
- Beneficiaries who willingly allow their Medicare number to be used in exchange for money, gifts, or unnecessary equipment and supplies.
- Suppliers who deliver an off-the-shelf product but bill Medicare for a more costly product.

What Can You Do to Stop Durable Medical Equipment Fraud?

- Be sure your doctor has assessed your condition and orders the equipment or supplies.
- 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). Look for charges for equipment you do not need, never requested, or did not receive.
- If you rent and return medical equipment, always get a dated receipt.
- Protect your Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security cards like credit cards.
- Do not accept products or services from strangers who call or knock on your door.
- Do not give out your Medicare number at a presentation or during a sales pitch.
- Do not accept money, gifts, or unnecessary equipment and supplies from a supplier in exchange for your Medicare number.

Example Medicare Charges for DME

Any Medicare code that starts with an “L” indicates that it is an orthotic, which is a type of DME. Here are some examples:

- **L0625-LO651:** Lumbar Orthosis ~ *Back brace*
- **L1810-L1860:** Knee Orthosis ~ *Knee brace*
- **L1900-L1990:** Ankle-foot Orthosis ~ *Ankle brace*
- **L3650-L3678:** Shoulder Orthosis ~ *Shoulder brace*
- **L3763-L3931:** Wrist Orthosis ~ *Wrist brace*

How Can the Ohio Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Help?

The Ohio local 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.

Contact the Ohio Senior Medicare Patrol
(www.proseniors.org/ohio-smp or call 800-293-4767.

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