

Tips to Avoid Home Health Fraud

Medicare covers home health services IF you are “homebound” (unable to leave your home without significant effort) and need one of the following services: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or skilled nursing services. Medicare does NOT cover basic personal care (help with bathing, dressing, etc.) or routine services, such as checking blood pressure or other vital signs, as a home health service unless you also receive therapy or skilled nursing.

Here are some tips to avoid home health fraud:

DO NOT...

- ★ DO NOT give your Medicare number to someone you do not know, especially someone who calls on the phone, comes to the door, or offers “free” services in exchange for your Medicare number. “Free” services, such as presentations, exercise classes, and health screenings do not require your Medicare number!
- ★ DO NOT accept services from someone who visits you unexpectedly, even if they say that your doctor sent them!
- ★ DO NOT sign up for home health services at a presentation or event.
- ★ DO NOT sign time sheets or other forms without reading them or sign blank forms.

DO...

- ★ DO contact your doctor if you think you may need home health services. Your doctor should order any services or supplies that you need.
- ★ DO ask the home health agency for a copy of your Plan of Care when you are being assessed for home health services. (This is an explanation of what services the home health agency will provide and why you need them.) Both you and your doctor should review a copy of your Plan of Care before you receive home health services.
- ★ DO read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from your insurance company. Watch for services that you did not get, services that were not ordered by your doctor, or other billing errors.

The Illinois SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program educates consumers about health care fraud, waste, and abuse. If you have questions about a claim on your Medicare Summary Notice or Explanation of Benefits, call the Illinois SMP program at **(800)699-9043**. Information about the Illinois SMP program is also available on our website: **www.illinoissmp.org**