

# MEDICARE AND HOME HEALTH CARE: Your Road to Recovery

Home health care is a variety of health care services given in your home to help you on your road to recovery or rehabilitation, often after a hospital stay. These services should be ordered by your doctor. Here is how to get home health care when you need it.



Always work with  
your doctor!

To receive home health care your  
doctor must certify that you:



Are  
Homebound



Need  
Skilled Care



Have a Plan  
of Care

## Home health care FRAUD is a big problem in our state!

Scammers trick people into signing up for unnecessary home health services by saying that you don't have to pay for anything. But when you accept services in the home that you do not need, scammers are actually **stealing** from Medicare. Accepting unnecessary home health services may prevent you from getting those services when you actually need them. If you feel this has happened to you, call SMP at AgeOptions **(800) 699-9043**.





## This is a common example of fraud...

Mr. Lee attended a presentation at the local senior center where he had his blood pressure taken. The presenter told Mr. Lee that she worked with Medicare and asked him if he would like to have a doctor come into his home once a month, a nurse to check on him once a week, and a personal assistant to help him with chores, such as light cleaning. The presenter told Mr. Lee not to worry about the cost, because all of the services would be paid for by Medicare. Mr. Lee liked the idea of in-home care and help, so he wrote down all his personal information on a form, including his Medicare number.

The next week a doctor and nurse visited him. The nurse visited him three more times, and at each appointment she took his blood pressure and temperature and nothing more. A personal assistant never visited to clean his home. Mr. Lee was surprised and shocked when he received his Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) and read that his Medicare account was billed thousands of dollars for eight physical therapy sessions. This situation is considered Medicare fraud, because Mr. Lee's Medicare account was billed for services he never received, and the services were never ordered by his doctor.

**Do you really need home health services?**

**Ask yourself these questions:**

- ▶ **DID MY DOCTOR ORDER HOME HEALTH SERVICES?**  
Only a doctor can order home health services for you. Some fraudulent home health companies say they will send their own doctor to your home. This is a red flag. Only work with your doctor.
- ▶ **HAVE I BEEN CERTIFIED HOMEBOUND BY MY DOCTOR?**  
Being homebound means that it is difficult for you to leave your home without the assistance of another person or the use of a supportive device like a walker or wheelchair. Your doctor must fill out a form certifying you as being homebound.
- ▶ **IS THE HOME HEALTH AGENCY PROVIDING SKILLED CARE?**  
Skilled home health care includes services such as skilled nursing, physical therapy and speech therapy. Just taking your blood pressure, checking your temperature, etc. does not qualify as skilled care.

**PREVENT**

Medicare fraud by not giving out your personal information to someone you do not know or accepting home health services that were not ordered by your doctor.

**DETECT**

Medicare fraud by reading your Medicare Summary Notice to make sure the claims for services and supplies are what you actually received. Read the description to verify that the home health company is billing Medicare only for services they provided.

**REPORT**

Medicare fraud by calling the Illinois SMP at **(800)699-9043** with questions about claims on your Medicare Summary Notice.