



ND SMP Scam of the Month – January 2022

Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Scams

Medicare Part B covers durable medical equipment (DME), which is equipment that serves a medical purpose, can withstand repeated use, is appropriate for use in the home, although it may be used outside the home, and is likely to last for three years or more. Some examples of DME: wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, electric scooters, and portable oxygen equipment.

Your medical provider must sign an order or prescription for the necessary medical equipment. If you have Original Medicare, you should get your DME from a Medicare-approved supplier that takes assignment. Be aware that many suppliers are Medicare-approved but DO NOT take assignment, meaning they may charge more than the Medicare approved amount and you could be responsible for the additional cost.

When DME becomes FRAUD, some examples of DME fraud and abuse might include:

- A supplier wants you to use their doctors (rather than your own), and these doctors then prescribe unnecessary medical equipment.
- Someone steals your Medicare number and uses it to bill Medicare for DME that is not needed or is never delivered.
- Someone calls you or visits your home to offer you “free” equipment that you do not need, and then bills Medicare for the equipment.
- Beneficiaries who willingly allow their Medicare number to be used in exchange for money, gifts, or unnecessary equipment and supplies.
- A DME supplier bills Medicare for more expensive equipment than the supplies or equipment provided.
- A DME supplier continues billing Medicare for rental payments for your DME after it has been returned.

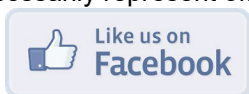
Remember that Medicare typically does not cover DME unless **YOUR** doctor has certified that you need it. Be skeptical of offers that seem too good to be true, and **DO NOT** give out personal information to someone who calls offering DME that you did not ask for. If you see suspicious charges on your MSNs or EOBs, call your provider to see if they have made a billing error. If you suspect DME fraud, **contact ND SMP by email at ndsmp@minotstateu.edu or call 1-800-233-1737**. For non-Medicare fraud issues, contact the ND Attorney General’s Office at 1-800-472-2600.

The information provided is intended to be a general summary only. Source of information: SHIP National Technical Assistance Center (December 2021). *Medicare Minute: Medicare coverage of durable medical equipment*. 2021 Medicare Rights Center.

North Dakota Senior Medicare Patrol Phone: 800-233-1737 or (701) 858-3580

For more information or to locate your SMP, visit <https://ndcpd.org/smp/>

This project was supported, in part, by grant number 90MPPG0021, from the Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services. Points of view or opinions do not necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.



Like us on Facebook: North Dakota Senior Medicare Patrol