



SCAM ALERT: Braces

Durable Medical Equipment has been an area ripe with fraud for many years. The Senior Medicare Patrol of Iowa (SMP) is seeing many cases where Iowans on Medicare are receiving braces (ankle, back, knee and neck) from out of state providers. These braces are ordered by doctors or other providers that the individual has never heard of or seen.

Some of these scams are promoted through television ads for braces that are “covered by Medicare.” Others occur through telephone calls and postcards. **DO NOT** fall for these scams! Your doctor knows if you need medical care or equipment. Only a medical professional familiar with your medical needs should be prescribing equipment for you, not some unknown doctor from another state.

If you are a victim of this fraud, please take the following steps:

1. Report the suspected fraud to the **Iowa SMP at 1-800-351-4664**. We will report the fraud to the U.S. Office of Inspector General for investigation. Be sure to give us the name, address and phone number (if known) of the company which sent the brace(s).
2. Contact the company that sent the items about returning the items. Ask for a postage paid return label. Return should be at no cost to you.
3. If you return the item, be sure to get a receipt for the return and a tracking number to monitor the return of the item. Keep a copy of the receipt and the tracking notice when the item has been received by the supplier.
4. Check your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) to see the name of the doctor who ordered the braces and be sure to share this information with SMP.
5. **NEVER** give your Medicare number, Social Security, bank or credit card numbers to someone you don't know and for services not ordered by medical providers you trust.
6. If you mistakenly gave your **NEW** Medicare number to a scammer, call 1-800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227) to report the theft of your number and request a new Medicare number. If you give your old Medicare number, which includes a Social Security number, call the FTC Identity Theft helpline at 877-ID-THEFT (877-438-4338).

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) helps identify and report possible Medicare fraud, errors and abuse. SMP is a service of the Iowa SHIP and State of Iowa Insurance Division. All services are free, confidential and unbiased.

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