



Iowa Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)
a Project of *Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A)*
March 2016 *News You Can Use*

Scams and Identity Theft

Common Scams

Be suspicious of doctors, health care providers, or suppliers who:

- Ask for your Medicare number:
 - In exchange for free equipment or services
 - For “record keeping purposes”
- Tell you that tests become cheaper as more of them are provided
- Advertise “free” consultations to people with Medicare
- Call or visit you and say they represent Medicare or the federal government
- Use telephone or door-to-door selling techniques
- Use pressure or scare tactics to sell you expensive medical services or diagnostic tests
- Bill Medicare for services you never received or a diagnosis you do not have
- Offer non-medical transportation or housekeeping as Medicare-approved services
- Bill home health services for patients who are not confined to their home, or for patients who still drive
- Bill Medicare for medical equipment for people in nursing homes
- Bill Medicare for tests you received as a hospital inpatient or within 72 hours of admission or discharge
- Bill Medicare for a power wheelchair or scooter when you don’t meet Medicare’s qualifications

Identity Theft

Identity theft happens when someone uses your personal information without your consent to commit fraud or other crimes. Personal information includes your name, Social Security, Medicare, or credit card numbers.

The crime takes many forms. Identity thieves may rent an apartment, obtain a credit card, or establish a telephone account in your name. You may not find out about the theft until you review your credit report or a credit card statement and notice charges you didn’t make—or until you’re contacted by a debt collector.

Protect yourself. Keep your personal information safe. Don’t give your information out over the Internet, or to anyone who comes to your home (or calls you) uninvited. Give personal information only to doctors or other Medicare approved providers.

To see if a provider is Medicare approved, call:

- 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227)
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