



2011 SEPTEMBER SMP NEWSLETTER

Heads Up on a Rash of Telemarketing Calls

The odds that you will receive an unwanted phone call about diabetes testing supplies are going up quickly. Senior Medicare Patrol has received MANY reports from all around the state that telemarketers are phoning – they are persistent and convincing.

According to the National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 26.9% of persons age 65 and over had diabetes last year. So, when a telemarketer or potential scam artist makes a call to retired persons, they have better than a one in four chance of reaching a person with diabetes.

Here are the things we encourage you to remember when you get an unexpected call from someone saying you can get free diabetes testing supplies if you are on Medicare.

1. If you have not been a customer of the business, Medicare rules say they should not make cold calls to sell you medical supplies and then claim benefits from Medicare. If possible, you should get the name of the caller the name of the business, the business address and phone number, then report this information to Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-800-423-2449. Anddo not do business with them.
2. If you are currently getting Medicare-covered items from a medical supply business they may call you and offer other supplies. They'll already have your Medicare number and physician name on record so please tell them you will talk with your doctor before making a decision about additional medical supplies or equipment.
3. Do not accept a caller's word if they say they've already OK'd this with your doctor or that your doctor requested these supplies for you. You or your family or personal representative should talk with you doctor first.
4. Do not give your Medicare number and or physician's name during a call that you did not initiate. You have no way of verifying the authenticity of the call and could be giving your valuable personal information to a scam artist.
5. Do not let the “**startle**” factor get the best of you. We have heard from so many seniors who were convinced to give personal information because they answered a call before they got up in the morning or while napping or heard the phone ring while on the porch or in the garden and ran to answer it quickly. It's human nature to let your guard down when you are surprised, in a hurry or not feeling sharp due to sleepiness or poor health.

No one besides you and your doctor or other health care provider you are working with, should make decisions about what medical supplies you need or where you should buy them, even if Medicare pays the full charge.

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