[USE YOUR OWN LETTERHEAD, INCLUDING LOGO]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information

[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME. INCLUDE SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL.]
[INSERT CONTACT NAME]
[INSERT PHONE NUMBER]
[INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS]

**Beware of Common Medical Equipment Scams**

As different types of scams come and go, one type remains constant: durable medical equipment, or DME, schemes. DME includes medical devices and supplies that are prescribed by a person’s doctor, can withstand repeated use, serve a medical purpose, and can be used in the home. Examples include braces, orthotics, and mobility aids such as walkers, canes, crutches, and wheelchairs.

“DME schemes are some of the most common types of scams that we hear about,” said [INSERT SMP CONTACT NAME AND TITLE HERE. Be sure to also include “Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)”]. “Scammers call people and offer ‘free’ braces, claiming that Medicare will fully cover these materials. In reality, Medicare only covers 80% for DME, and if you are in pain you should always talk to your doctor about what they recommend. We have received reports of beneficiaries agreeing to be mailed one back brace but receiving packages holding multiple, unneeded braces for a variety of body parts. Many of these braces cost almost $1,000, meaning that this type of fraud increases the cost of Medicare for everyone.”

INSERT SMP CONTACT NAME continued, “Beneficiaries who give out their Medicare numbers are also at risk of having their medical identities stolen. They may receive equipment or genetic testing kits they don’t want or need and could even be left responsible for large bills for these items.”

This type of fraud can be stopped. The SMP suggests people take the following steps:

* Be sure your doctor has assessed your condition and orders any necessary equipment or supplies.
* Never sign a blank form from your health care provider or equipment supplier.
* Always read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB). Look for charges for equipment you do not need, never requested, or did not receive.
* If you rent and return medical equipment, always get a dated receipt.
* Protect your Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security cards as you would your credit cards.
* Do not accept products or services from strangers who call or knock on your door.
* Do not give out your Medicare number to a supplier during a sales pitch or an unsolicited phone call.
* Do not accept money, gifts, or unnecessary equipment or supplies from a supplier in exchange for your Medicare number.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is ready to provide you with the information you need to PROTECT yourself from Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse; DETECT potential fraud, errors, and abuse; and REPORT your concerns. SMPs help educate and empower Medicare beneficiaries in the fight against health care fraud. Your SMP can help you with your questions, concerns, or complaints about potential fraud and abuse issues. It also provides information and educational presentations. To locate the local Senior Medicare Patrol, contact [INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION].