

FRAUD ALERT!

Durable Medical Equipment Scam

Scam artists are posing as representatives from medical equipment companies and visiting senior citizens where they most frequently gather - at Senior Centers, Senior Housing and Shopping Centers. The scam artists tell the seniors that, since they have Medicare coverage, they are entitled to free medical equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, diabetic shoes and other durable medical equipment).

The fraudulent representative will bring seniors to the company's "specialist" for an examination, a prescription for the medical equipment and then bill Medicare directly. If the senior actually receives the equipment, the item does not fit, is broken or is unusable. When the company is contacted for replacement or refund, the phone number on the business card is disconnected or they are told the person in charge will call back (which they do not).

This creates an additional problem since the senior may not be eligible for another piece of equipment for up to three years.

In another twist on this scam, seniors are told a similar story, but are not taken to the company "doctor," they are asked for their personal identification and insurance information. Under the guise of having the equipment company's "representative" submit the prescription FOR you, will only allow the scam artist to leave with your personal information. If you do not have a prescription from your doctor, you cannot receive new medical equipment. With or without the doctor's approval, the fraudulent representative will still have your personal information.

Things to remember:

- In order to get durable medical equipment (walkers, cane, wheelchair etc.) your doctor has to authorize a prescription.
- If you do not have a prescription from you doctor for a specific item and a company contacts you about ordering items for free, this is unethical and may be a scam.
- Durable medical equipment companies who are on the up and up do not do cold calls or hang out in shopping malls or senior living complexes looking for clients.
- Once you get a piece of equipment it is very hard to change it for another (i.e. going from a walker to a wheelchair or wheelchair to electric chair or scooter) even if your needs change.

If you have questions about your Medicare coverage contact the Medicare Hotline at 1-800-633-4227 or visit www.medicare.gov. For more information on this or other scams, please contact one of the Task Force agencies below.

BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

FIGHTING ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION OF OLDER ADULTS IN BUCKS COUNTY

Bucks County District Attorney's Office

215-348-6344

Bucks County Consumer Protection

215-348-6060

Bucks County Register of Wills

215-348-6265

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging

215-348-0510

Network of Victim Assistance

1-800-675-6900

Bucks County Coroner

215-348-3852

Elder Abuse Hotline 1-800-490-8505
www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org