

SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL HAWAII

SMP Hawaii News

SUMMER 2019



SMP Hawaii Volunteer 'Ohana

Aloha SMP Friends!

April is known nationally as Volunteer Recognition Month. SMP Hawaii recognizes its 50+ team members throughout the State of Hawaii who commit their time, talent and experience toward providing outreach and education to kupuna, family members and caregivers. Teaching seniors to detect and report Medicare fraud, and empowering them to protect themselves and their personal information are important lessons can be applied to the many of scams that plaque kupuna today. We offer a FOND ALOHA to all our SMP Volunteer 'Ohana. They are the "beacons of light" for their communities!

In addition to highlighting some of our exemplary volunteers, this edition looks more closely at DME (durable medical equipment) scams, one of the most serious forms of Medicare fraud. Also on the rise is a new fraud scheme revolving around Genetic Testing, sometimes referred to as DNA Testing or Cancer Screenings. Please read the Genetic Testing Fraud Alert on the back cover.

As always, we ask that you share this information with your 'ohana, friends, and community groups.

Mahalo,



Kaipolani Cullen, SMP Hawaii Program Manager

\$ 1.2 Billion Durable Medical Equipment Scammers Indicted

Hopefully, you heard the news reports in early April about the FBI bust of a 24-person fraud ring that bilked Medicare out of \$1.2 billion. This crime ring included licensed medical professionals and others, who tricked seniors into giving out their Medicare numbers by telling them they could get pain relief by using “free” medical braces (DME). The licensed MDs that were part of this scam wrote phony prescriptions, then billed Medicare and sent the beneficiaries multiple braces, in some cases worth thousands of dollars. Check out this news report:

<https://www.whec.com/news/news10nbc-pulls-back-the-curtain-on-a-massive-medicare-fraud/5313812/?cat=565>

It’s wonderful news for Medicare and taxpayers that these crooks were caught, but don’t be fooled into thinking that it ends here. Be aware of the newest scam that is rapidly targeting seniors, DNA Testing (see back cover). Medicare is bombarded by many scams to the tune of \$60 billion annually!

A message from the Office of Inspector General:

<https://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/consumer-alerts/alerts/bracescam.asp>.



Kupuna Alert Partners (KAP) is a multi-agency partnership that offers presentations and information to the community on:

- Medicare Fraud
- Prescription Drug Misuse
- Securities Fraud
- Top 5 Scams in Hawaii

FREE presentations statewide upon request.

For more information, please contact:

Department of the Attorney General
(808) 586-1487

Executive Office on Aging
(808) 586-7281

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oahu

YMCA's 26th National Senior Health & Fitness Day

When: May 29, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

Where: Kahala Mall

Contact: Sherry Goya,
(808) 235-3650

11th Hawaii United Okinawa Association Senior Health and Fitness Fair

When: June 14, 9:00 am–1:00 pm

Where: Hawaii Okinawa Center, 94-587 Ukee St, Waipahu

Contact: Karen Kuba-Hori,
(808) 676-5400

3rd Annual Lanakila Health and Wellness Fair

When: June 14, 9:00 am–1:00 pm

Where: Lanakila Multi-Purpose Senior Center, 1640 Lanakila Ave

Contact: Suzanne Oakland,
(808) 842-1324

Maui

Medicare ID Theft and Fraud Prevention

SMP Presentation

When: Thursday, May 16,
10:00 am–11:00am

Where: Kalama Heights Retirement Center, 101 Kanani Road, Kihei

Contact: Karen Hoholik,
(808) 879-1500

Hawaii Island

4th Annual Hawaii Senior Ukulele Festival

When: May 16, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm

Where: Kauai Community College

Register online at: <https://aarp.cvent.com/cyber5-23>



Durable Medical Equipment Fraud and Abuse **How does Medicare cover durable medical equipment (DME)?**

Durable medical equipment (DME) is reusable equipment that you need to treat an illness or injury, or to improve the functioning of what Medicare rules refer to as a malformed body part. It includes a variety of items. Medicare usually covers DME if the equipment:

- Is durable, meaning it is able to withstand repeated use
- Serves a medical purpose
- Is appropriate for use in the home, although you can also use it outside the home
- Is likely to last for three years or more.

Whether you have Original Medicare or a Medicare Advantage Plan, the types of Medicare-covered equipment should be the same. Examples of DME include wheelchairs, walkers, hospital beds, power scooters, and portable oxygen equipment. In addition to DME, Medicare also covers prosthetics, orthotics, and some non-reusable supplies. Together these items are referred to as “DMEPOS,” durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotics, and supplies. Prescription medications and supplies that you use with your DME, even if they are disposable or can only be used once (like medication used with nebulizers or lancets and test strips used with diabetes self-testing equipment) are covered in this category.

For your DME to be covered, your doctor or primary care provider (PCP) must sign an order, prescription, or certificate—in many cases, after a face-to-face visit.

Original Medicare covers DME at 80% of its approved amount, meaning that you are responsible for a 20% coinsurance charge as long as you get your DME from a supplier who accepts assignment (accepts Medicare’s approved amount as full payment). Call 1-800-MEDICARE to find a provider who accepts assignment.

If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, your plan must cover the same DME as Original Medicare but can do so with different costs and coverage rules. Check with your plan to learn about their costs and coverage rules for DME.

The Medicare Rights Center is the author of portions of the content in these materials but is not responsible for any content not authored by the Medicare Rights Center.



What might DME fraud, errors and abuse look like?

Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse involve a wide range of behaviors that result in unnecessary costs to the Medicare program.

Some examples of DME fraud and abuse might include:

- Someone uses a fraudulent physician's identity, or a physician's stolen identity, to medically certify that you need supplies.
- Someone steals your Medicare number and uses it to bill Medicare for DME that is not needed and/or is never delivered.
- Someone offers you a meal or food in exchange for your Medicare number.
- Someone calls you or visits your home to offer you "free" equipment that you do not need, and then bills Medicare for the equipment.
- A DME supplier bills Medicare for more expensive equipment than the equipment that is provided, or continues to bill Medicare for rental payments for equipment after it has been returned.

How can I protect myself from DME fraud, errors, and abuse?

- Remember the rules about Medicare's coverage of DME: Medicare will not cover DME unless your doctor or PCP has certified that you need it.
- Be aware of aggressive marketing that tries to persuade you to change DME suppliers. Before making a decision to change suppliers, speak with your doctor and your current supplier to see if there is a need for you to change.
- Do not respond to ads that offer "free" equipment, be skeptical of offers that seem too good to be true, and do not give any personal information to someone who calls offering DME you did not ask for.
- Protect your Medicare number. Only give your Medicare number to doctors or other providers.
- Check your Medicare Summary Notices (MSNs) if you have Original Medicare, or your Explanations of Benefits (EOBs) if you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, and billing statements regularly. Carefully look for any suspicious charges or errors, and if you find one, call your doctor to find out if they've made a billing error.
- Remember that providers are not permitted to routinely waive cost-sharing or offer gifts or financial incentives for you to receive services from them.

The Medicare Rights Center is the author of portions of the content in these materials but is not responsible for any content not authored by the Medicare Rights Center.



SMP Celebrates an Anuenue Warrior!

Louise Corpuz, of Maui, inspired the 1st Annual SMP Anuenue (Rainbow) Warrior Award for her dedication, commitment, hard work and Can-Do Attitude. Louise transitioned on Mother's Day. Despite her year and 1/2 battle with pancreatic cancer, she exemplified altruism at its finest.

Without complaint she continued to minister to RSVP beneficiaries, participated in UPW and ILWU meetings, attended Hale Mahaolu Board events, church activities, cancer support groups and yet continued to actively distribute materials at SMP events on Maui, including a recent Stroke Awareness Fair on May 2. Truly Louise represents the best that graces the SMP Hawaii volunteer corps, serving as an exceptional role model and inspiration for all of us.

DME and Medicare: Be Aware

By Joyce Takahashi, SMP Kauai Volunteer

Following a hip replacement surgery on Kauai I received DME prescriptions from my doctor which included a cane and a walker. I had a difficult time finding a DME provider on Kauai who accepted Medicare, so I ended up purchasing these items at Longs and paying out-of-pocket. After filing FORM CMS-1490S (SC), PATIENTS'S REQUEST FOR MEDICAL PAYMENT requesting reimbursement my claim was denied. I then filed an appeal that was eventually paid. All this extra paperwork cost me time and energy that could have been avoided. Hawaii SHIP has a complete listing of all Medicare authorized DME providers on each island. I wish I had called them first! If you need help figuring out where to purchase your DME supplies from, call Hawaii SHIP first!

Hawaii SHIP Help Line

(808) 586-7299

or toll free **1-888-875-9229**

Page 5



UPCOMING EVENTS

Hawaii Island

4th Annual Hawaii Senior Ukulele Festival

When: May 16, 1:00 pm–3:00 pm
Where: Kauai Community College
Register online at: <https://aarp.cvent.com/cyber5-23>

RSVP Blood Drive Hilo

When: May 21, 7:30 am–2:45 pm
Where: Auntie Sally's Lu'au Hale, Hilo
Contact: Kathleen Azevedo, 808-961-8730

RSVP Blood Drive Hilo

When: May 21, 7:30 am–2:45 pm
Where: Auntie Sally's Lu'au Hale, Hilo
Contact: Kathleen Azevedo, 808-961-8730

Unwanted braces or other durable medical equipment (DME) sent to you? Here's what to do:

1. **Find a return address** from the package or call the company for one. Don't pay to ship it back, the company should cover this expense.
2. **Check your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN)** or login to mymedicare.gov to see the claim.
3. Contact the **Senior Medicare Patrol** for questions.





PROTECT

DETECT

REPORT

Genetic Testing Fraud Alert

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) provided a recent alert about the newest Medicare scam occurring throughout the U.S. under the guise of DNA Testing and/or Genetic Cancer Screenings. SMP Hawaii has also received a report of a suspicious local company as described in this alert notice.

Representatives from genetic testing companies, or possibly insurance agents working on behalf of these companies, may ask to participate in events attended by seniors including health fairs and senior community presentations. The Centers for Medicaid Services (CMS) has received inquiries from beneficiaries stating that they have been billed for genetic testing or cancer screenings performed at community events and senior centers. For the protection of all Medicare beneficiaries, family members and care givers, SMP Hawaii advises that kupuna be “akamai” and decline to provide their personal information to anyone claiming to offer genetic cancer screenings.



PROTECT YOURSELF!

- **Do not give out your Medicare number or Social Security number. Be cautious of unsolicited requests for your Medicare or Social Security numbers. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.**
- **Do not consent to any lab tests at senior centers, health fairs, or in your home. Be suspicious of anyone claiming that genetic tests and cancer screenings are at no cost to you.**
- **Genetic tests and cancer screenings must be medically necessary and ordered by your doctor to be covered by Medicare. Random genetic testing and cancer screenings aren't covered by Medicare. If you are interested in the test, speak with your doctor.**
- **Monitor your Medicare Summary Notice to see if there are any services you didn't have or didn't want but were billed for. Medicare Summary Notices are sent every three months if you get any services or medical supplies during that 3-month period.**
- **Call 1-800-MEDICARE or 1-800-HHS-TIPS if you think you're a victim of fraud.**