

The Senior Medicare Patrol is.....

LOOKING OUT FOR YOU

DATE: 4/1/16

2016-4

SUBJECT: Home Health Care Fraud Hits Close to Home

A Big Island mother/daughter duo pleaded guilty to Medicaid fraud on March 10, 2016. Susan Escobar and Yolanda Cristina Escobar Hiro were fined more than \$14,000 and ordered to do 200 hours of community service for falsifying timesheets and progress reports in order to bill the State Medicaid program for home health care services which never were provided.

A doctor who tried to bilk Medicare out of \$375 million in a home health care scam will go to trial in Texas soon. The case, the largest of its kind, involved 11,000 Medicare beneficiaries who were enticed with free meals, food stamps and cash to give over their Medicare numbers. The doctor and his accomplices filed bogus documents claiming these beneficiaries were homebound. They billed Medicare for home health care services that were unneeded or never provided, and for which most of the beneficiaries were not qualified.

To keep fraud out of home health care, Medicare has strict rules for home health agencies. This not only protects Medicare; it protects you from care from questionable providers. You may be more vulnerable if you are homebound and not in a supervised setting like a nursing home.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

If you have Medicare or Medicaid or if you are a caregiver:

PROTECT yourself from home health care fraud:

- Know your plan's rules for home health care
- Make sure your physician approves your care plan
- Beware of an agency that offers you free goods and services in exchange for your Medicare number
- Do not sign blank documents, especially timesheets

DETECT billing errors and possible fraud:

- Check for fake or forged signatures on documents
- Check your medical statements for services, such as missed visits from agency staff or visits when nothing was done, or equipment that was not necessary or never received

REPORT: If you or a loved one is receiving Medicaid benefits and suspect that a provider may be committing fraud, please call the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU), Department of the Attorney General, State of Hawaii, at (808) 586-1058. Or call SMP Hawaii at 1-800-296-9422, and we will refer your complaint to the MFCU for you.



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