



Protecting Medicare's Power Wheelchair and Scooter Benefit

Medicare is working very hard with other government agencies to protect the Medicare Program from fraud and abuse and to help you get the equipment that meets your needs. However, we are aware of fraud and abuse in the power wheelchair and scooter industry. For example, some suppliers of medical equipment try to cheat the Medicare Program by offering power wheelchairs and scooters (also known as Power Operated Vehicles (POV)) to people who don't meet Medicare's rules (don't qualify for Medicare to pay for this equipment).

What is Medicare Fraud?

Medicare fraud can happen when your supplier gives false or misleading information to you or to the Medicare Program to get payment for equipment that you don't medically need. This includes having Medicare pay for more advanced equipment than you need. Medicare fraud wastes a lot of money every year. This results in higher health care costs for you.

You Can Help Protect Yourself and Medicare from Fraud

You can help by making sure you get the equipment that best fits your medical needs. You can also help by understanding when it's appropriate for Medicare to pay for power wheelchairs and scooters.



How to Know if You Qualify for a Power Wheelchair or Scooter

You must meet all of these conditions to qualify for a power wheelchair or scooter:

- You have a health condition where you need help with activities of daily living like bathing, dressing, getting in or out of the bed or chair, moving around, and using the bathroom.
- You are unable to operate a manual wheelchair.
- You are able to safely operate the controls of the power wheelchair or scooter.
- You have had a face-to-face exam and received an order for the equipment from the doctor or practitioner who is treating you.
- You must be able to safely use the power wheelchair or scooter in your home.
- You have interest in using a power wheelchair or scooter.

You must also meet the conditions below to qualify for a scooter:

- You must be willing to use a scooter.
- You must meet the weight capacity of the scooter.
- You must have good vision.
- You must be mentally able to safely use a scooter.
- You must be able to safely get on and off of a scooter.

Remember, you must have a medical need for Medicare to cover a power wheelchair or scooter. Medicare won't cover this equipment if it will be used mainly for leisure or recreational activities, or if it's only needed to move around outside your home.

Note: You have the choice of either renting or buying a power wheelchair or scooter. If you don't need a power wheelchair or scooter on a long term basis, you may want to rent the equipment to reduce your out-of-pocket costs. Talk to your supplier to find out more about this option.



How to Spot Fraud and Abuse

You can help protect Medicare by looking out for

- Suppliers who offer you a free power wheelchair, scooter, or manual wheelchair
- Suppliers who want you to use their doctors
- Calls from companies you didn't give your phone number to

What to do if You Suspect Fraud and Abuse

Use this three step approach if you suspect fraud:

Step 1. Call your health care provider.

Step 2. Call your Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier (the company that contracts with Medicare to pay bills for durable medical equipment, like wheelchairs).

- To get the telephone number for your Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier, visit www.medicare.gov on the web. Under "Search Tools," select "Find Helpful Phone Numbers and Websites."
- You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get the telephone number. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Step 3. Call the Inspector General's hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477).

For More Information

Medicare is here for you 24 hours a day, every day.

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