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AgeOptions Assists CBS 2 Investigation into Multimillion Dollar Medical Supply Scam



Travis Trumitch tells Pam Zekman of CBS 2 about the medical supplies scam against older people.

Have you received a phone call offering you a “free” back or knee brace? Maybe you’ve seen the commercials touting the devices and claiming Medicare will pay for them. If so, you’ve witnessed a multimillion dollar scam in which you – and all taxpayers – are footing the bill.

AgeOptions has investigated these and other scams and warned consumers about them through the Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol Program (SMP). “Right now the medical supplies phone scams are the biggest ones in the state and across the country,” says Travis Trumitch, SMP coordinator. “It’s very sad to see these companies trying to defraud innocent people, and it’s a crime, so we need to be on top of it.”

When CBS 2’s Investigative Team contacted AgeOptions in October about the medical supplies scam, Travis and the SMP team worked with them to provide information to consumers. They connected Pulitzer-prize winning investigative reporter Pam Zekman with two Illinois clients who related their experiences with the scam, including being inundated with calls and receiving non-stop, multiple deliveries of devices they don’t need and that their doctors didn’t prescribe. Zekman cited a 2016 report showing Medicare paid almost \$2.5 billion for prosthetics and orthotics, including braces.

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[Watch the video and read the story here.](#)

“Costs to taxpayers could increase if we don’t stay on top of this problem,” Travis says. “Our outreach with the Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol Program encourages everyone to protect, detect and report any potential fraud they come across.” He also cautions consumers of all ages to:

- Call Illinois SMP at AgeOptions, (708)383-0258 if you experience Medicare fraud.
- Avoid answering phone calls from numbers you don’t recognize.
- If you do answer such a call, do not give your Medicare, Social Security, credit card or bank account number to the caller.
- Remember that Medicare and Social Security will not call you and will never ask for your personal information.

Medicare scams involving durable medical equipment such as braces are very common in Illinois. For more information, read the SMP tip sheet "[Durable Medical Equipment \(DME\): Make Sure That Medicare Will Cover It](#)" (also available in [Spanish](#)).