

Help protect your patients by providing medical ID protection - best practices

Published: Jan 1, 2020 - State & Federal / Medicare

Category: Medicare

Overview

Many of our members have reported that they received unsolicited calls (or emails) from an individual or company offering to provide durable equipment devices, such as back or leg braces, or items such as topical creams at little or no cost. While it may be tempting to want to receive something for free, members should know that there is a cost.

Although our members may not receive a bill for these devices or medications, the items are billed to the insurance companies, costing hundreds or even thousands of dollars each.

How does this impact members?

Members should also know that the cost may be more than monetary. Allergic reactions may occur when using medications that are not properly prescribed. Ill-fitting leg or back braces, or equipment that is not specifically intended for the pain experienced by the member, could do more harm than good.

This problem is prevalent throughout the country, so all of our members should be aware. Billions of unsolicited telemarketing calls are made each year, many of which are promoting health care services. Calls often spoof local phone numbers or numbers that appear familiar to trick the recipient into accepting the call.

How can I help protect my patients?

While the ultimate purpose of these telemarketing calls is to sell these items, the immediate goal of the person or company placing the call is to obtain valuable personally identifiable information (PII) from the member. Without this personal information, such as a social security number or insurance identification number, selling these devices and medications is much more difficult. Share this information with you patients to help them learn how to protect their PII.

You can help protect your patients and their personally identifiable information from scams by reminding them of the following:

- Don't fall prey to scams!
- Take a few moments to review your *Explanation of Benefits (EOB)* and the services listed.
- When receiving robotic (robo) or telemarketing calls:
 - Simply hang up the phone.
 - Beware of threatening or urgent language used by the caller.
 - Do not provide any personally identifiable information such as your social security number or insurance identification number. The caller may imply that they have your information and ask you to provide it to confirm that they have the correct information. Do not provide the information or confirm it if they do happen to have any identification information.
- When receiving emails:
 - Do not open email attachments you weren't expecting.
 - Check for spelling mistakes and poor grammar.
 - Do **not** click on the links you are sent. You can type the link into a new browser.
 - Online scams can come from anywhere. Take a few moments to review your *EOB* and confirm that you received the services listed on the *EOB*.
- Additional ways to protect yourself:
 - Shred or destroy obsolete documents that contain medical claims information or *EOBs*.
 - Do not use social media to share medical treatment information.

How to report when you receive what you suspect is a scam call or email:

To file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, you can go to:

<https://ftc.gov/complaint> or call **1-877-FTC-HELP**.

Members may contact their plan's Member Services department.

505755MUPENMUB

URL: <https://providernews.anthem.com/wisconsin/article/help-protect-your-patients-by-providing-medical-id-protection-best-practices-1>

Featured In:

January 2020 Anthem Provider News - Indiana, January 2020 Anthem Provider News - Kentucky, January 2020 Anthem Provider News - Missouri, January 2020 Anthem Provider News - Ohio, January 2020 Anthem Provider News - Wisconsin

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Georgia: Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. dba HMO Nevada. In New Hampshire: Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. HMO plans are administered by Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. and underwritten by Matthew Thornton Health Plan, Inc. In Ohio: Community Insurance Company. In Virginia: Anthem Health Plans of Virginia, Inc. trades as Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, and its service area is all of Virginia except for the City of Fairfax, the Town of Vienna, and the area east of State Route 123. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWI), which underwrites or administers the PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out of network benefits in POS policies offered by CompCare or WCIC; CompCare Health Services Insurance Corporation (CompCare) underwrites or administers the HMO policies and Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Company (WCIC) underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Use of the Anthem websites constitutes your agreement with our Terms of Use.
