Healthcare fraud is widespread. Each year, it causes thousands of older adults to become victims and billions of dollars to be lost by Medicare and Medicaid. As a family caregiver, you are in a unique position to protect your loved ones from healthcare fraud. You can also help lower healthcare costs for everyone by preventing healthcare waste and abuse. This brochure describes some easy and effective steps you can take to reduce healthcare fraud, waste, and abuse.
Common Types of Healthcare Fraud

- Medical equipment fraud: When a health provider recommends a piece of equipment that is not really necessary, such as a power chair or a home hospital bed.
- Cold call solicitations: When someone selling a healthcare product, service, or health plan makes a phone call or home visit without an invitation.
- Identity theft: Unauthorized use of Medicare or Social Security numbers.
- Billing for non-rendered services: When a health provider bills for services that were not performed, such as an extra office visit or test.
- Up-coding: When a health provider bills for more costly services than delivered, such as for a specialized test when only a routine exam was performed, or charging for better quality equipment than provided.

Signs that an Elder May Need Help

While some older adults may not realize they need help, others may feel uncomfortable asking for help because it may reflect a loss of independence. Family caregivers who suspect their loved one is a victim of healthcare fraud should be aware of the following signs:

- Severe illness or Long Incapacitation: When people are not able to work or handle daily tasks.
- Cognitive Impairment: Problems with memory can interfere with decision-making abilities.
- Unnecessary services, supplies, or equipment: When there is a mismatch between what is recommended and what is actually needed.
- Properly trained, honest healthcare professionals do not push patients to purchase questionable items.
- Consultations with dubious professionals: Patients should be cautious of unusual medical equipment and miracle cures.
- Unnatural accent or demeanor: When a healthcare provider's manner is not consistent with their role.
- Cold call solicitations: When someone selling a medical equipment fraud.
- Medicare fraud: When a health provider bills for a service or product that is not necessary or needed.