



**motion picture
pioneers
assistance
fund**

SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Question: My doctor suggested I use a walker. With so many choices and prices, how do you know what to get and how much to pay?

Answer: Welcome to the confusing, overwhelming world of “durable medical equipment” (DME). It’s called “durable” because it’s meant to last for a few years. Walkers, wheelchairs, canes, hospital-style beds, prosthetics and other equipment help people improve their ability to function at home and in the community. They are vital to keep older adults active and safe.

For decades, companies that sell DME have been billing Medicare and other insurance providers at alarming rates with little oversight. There were many scams aimed at older adults with promises of free equipment. If they couldn’t collect from insurance, they would bill patients. In July 2013, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) advised DME providers that they must reapply to be able to bill CMS at competitive rates. Not all vendors applied, not all vendors who applied were approved and not all vendors were approved for all types of equipment in all regions. For example, you might need a

motorized wheelchair, but you may not be able to get it from the same company that provides your hospital bed or diabetes supplies.

Most patients are surprised to learn what Medicare may not cover. For example, Medicare will buy you a standard aluminum front-wheel walker, but if you want one with four wheels and a seat, you must pay to upgrade. Medicare Part B pays 80% of the approved cost. Your secondary (or supplemental) insurance will help you pay the rest and possibly help with the upgrade. Whether you can rent or buy DME depends on your plan. DME providers that accept Medicare cannot charge you any additional cost. They can charge for upgrades, so be mindful of efforts to “upsell.” Medicare HMO “Advantage” plans must offer the same DME as Medicare.

Avoid a DME claim denial by having your doctor order the equipment you need based on your health conditions. With some research and tenacity, you can get what you need to stay active and safe!

Source: “Medicare Coverage of Durable Medical Equipment and Other Devices,” publication #11045, www.medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE.
To find approved vendors in your area: www.medicare.gov/supplierdirectory/search.html.

JOKE OF THE MONTH

**“How many telemarketers does it take to change a lightbulb?
Only one, but she has to do it while you’re eating dinner.”**
— *A Prairie Home Companion Pretty Good Joke Book*

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

Go Green!

Receive *Social Services Corner* by email.

Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, or email info@wrmail.org.

Do you or does someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or visit www.wrpioneers.org to find out more about our assistance programs.



The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation.



NATIONAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS MONTH



September makes us think of many things: autumn leaves, school starting, the end of summer. But this year we were amazed to learn that September is

National Emergency Preparedness Month—but why not? Any month is a good time to take stock of your emergency plans and supplies.

An emergency can occur anywhere at any time. It could be a hurricane, earthquake, major power outage or worse. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) agree that the following are some of the necessary steps for emergency preparedness:

Have a plan: This includes setting up your own exit or “shelter in place” strategy for your home; establishing a meeting place where family and loved ones can look if you become separated; and keeping a list of emergency contacts outside your immediate geographic area in

Sources: FEMA’s website is called www.ready.gov. “Be Ready: September Is National Emergency Preparedness Month,” the Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/features/beready.

case local phone service is interrupted.

Make a kit: Food, water, can opener, flashlight, medicine and first aid supplies, radio (with batteries), blankets, and pet supplies are essentials. Non-essentials may include a change of clothes, sunscreen or garbage bags. Matches and other fire-starters may be dangerous if there is a gas leak. Folks in many parts of the country know about electricity generators, but that may not be practical for everyone.

Be informed: Learn to be aware of warning signs, listen to the local news, read emergency alerts that scroll across the TV screen and understand the dangers in your geographic area (floods, earthquakes, fires). Learn local emergency protocols both at home and away.

Get involved: If you know where aged or disabled neighbors reside on your street or in your apartment complex, help them be informed and prepared. Be a community leader by setting an example and providing education to others in your community.

NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF’S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

The Fund for Animals, www.fundforanimals.org, (301) 258-1417

The Fund for Animals provides veterinary, sanctuary and rehabilitative needs at its direct animal care facilities: Cleveland Amory Black Beauty Ranch, The Fund for Animals Wildlife Center, Cape Wildlife Center and Dutchess Sanctuary.

American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), www.aspca.org, (212) 876-7700

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA was the first humane organization in the US. While there are humane societies nationwide, the ASPCA is not directly affiliated with them. The ASPCA works nationally to rescue animals from abuse, pass humane laws and share resources with many shelters across the US. Visit its website to learn about its programs such as the Pet Loss Hotline, a service for people grieving the loss of an animal companion.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Trouble with American transportation is that you can get somewhere quicker than you can think of a reason for going there.”

—Will Rogers



To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit www.wrpioneers.org.