

Senior**ALERT**



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

“FREE WHEELCHAIR” SCAM

A SCAM TARGETING ELDERLY AND DISABLED TEXANS has been confirmed by the Waco Police Department. The con artists say they can arrange for a free motorized wheelchair paid for by Medicare, Medicaid or Social Security, as long as the victim works through their company. To receive the equipment, victims must divulge their Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid identification numbers. The thieves use this information to fraudulently bill the government for the wheelchair. In one case, the government was charged more than \$12,000 and the victim wound up owing more than \$1,200. In another case, the government was billed more than \$6,000 and the victim more than \$1,200. Neither victim received a wheelchair.

These con artists have posed as employees of a company that provides Medicare and Medicaid services, as Social Security officials, and as medical staff with the Texas Department of Human Services, sometimes wearing nurse's or medical scrubs. They have targeted public housing residents, nursing homes, hospitals and clinics in both urban and rural areas. This con has also been run through telemarketing calls and advertising flyers left on car windshields. In some cases, victims were offered a ride to Houston to see a doctor affiliated with the bogus company.

Be wary if someone you don't know offers to help you get a wheelchair or other medical equipment for free. If you need to buy medical equipment, deal only with well-established businesses. If you are approached by someone making this offer, ask to see their credentials and verify with the company or government agency they claim to represent. Do not give financial information to door-to-door salesmen or telemarketers. If you become aware of a wheelchair or medical equipment scam operating in your area, notify your local police immediately.

Greg Abbott

Attorney General of Texas

WRITE TO: Greg Abbott, Office of the Attorney General
PO Box 12548, Austin, TX 78711-2548
800-252-8011 or WWW.OAG.STATE.TX.US