

Feds crack down on Medicare fraud

by UPI

LOS ANGELES -- Federal officials want to crack down nationwide on Medicare fraud by equipment suppliers, particularly in California and Florida. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will require accrediting of medical equipment suppliers to prevent fraudulent billings, the Los Angeles Times said. In addition to accrediting suppliers, the federal government will require prices be set through competitive bidding. Rules are expected to take effect this spring, the paper said. Some medical equipment suppliers say the rules are too harsh and they'll need to stop accepting Medicare patients. Alice Christoff, an 84-year-old Santa Maria, Calif., woman who's blind and can't walk, told the Times when she shopped for an electronic wheelchair last year, a saleswoman foisted \$28,300 worth of unneeded equipment on her, including a hospital bed, all of which was billed to Medicare. "I don't understand anything about medical equipment," Christoff told the paper. "When she said I had to have it, I just said OK."

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Feds crack down on Medicare fraud by UPI