

Heavy price: Medicare overpaying for back braces

December 19 2012, by Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar

A new report says Medicare has been paying more than \$900 for a standard-type back brace you can find on the Internet for \$250 or less.

In a report to be released Wednesday, investigators say Medicare paid an average of \$919 for back braces that cost suppliers \$191 apiece, a window on how wasteful spending drives up [health care costs](#).

The [inspector general](#) at the federal Health and Human Services Department says [Medicare](#) and its beneficiaries could have saved millions of dollars if what the program paid more closely reflected the cost to suppliers.

A copy of the report was obtained by The Associated Press.

Investigators decided to take a look after costs for the back braces went up \$60 million in just a few years.

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