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New Medicare Card, Same Old Scammers

Des Moines, Iowa - New, more secure Medicare cards are being mailed to Medicare participants. The new number will be unique to every person with Medicare. The old cards are being replaced because they were based on a person's Social Security number. Scammers sometimes use Social Security numbers to try to steal someone's identity, open new credit cards or even take out loans in someone else's name.

Your benefits won't change with the New Medicare card, and it'll be mailed to you for free—you don't need to take any action to get it.

"Scammers are hoping that you won't be informed about the change in Medicare cards," Kris Gross from the Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) said. "Iowans need to be aware that scammers may try to use the opportunity to get their personal information."

Fight back by following these tips:

Don't pay for your new Medicare card. It's free. If anyone calls and says you need to pay for it, that's a scam. Never give your Social Security number, bank account number or send cash to anyone who says they need it for you to get your new Medicare card.

Don't give your Medicare number to people you don't know or haven't contacted first. Some scammers call pretending to be from Medicare, but Medicare, or someone representing Medicare, will never ask for your personal information for you to get your new Medicare card. Only share your Medicare number with doctors or trusted people in the community who work with Medicare, like your state SHIIP. Say "no thank you" to anybody you don't know who offers to help you complete applications or forms that require you to fill out personal information like your Social Security number.

Don't give your bank account information to people you don't know. If someone offers to deposit a rebate or bonus into your bank account because you got a new Medicare card, that's a scam.

Don't let anyone trick you into believing your Medicare benefits will be canceled unless you give them your Medicare number. If someone threatens to cancel your health benefits if you don't share your Medicare number, hang up! If you get a suspicious call, contact 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227; TTY: 1-877-486-2048).

Destroy your old Medicare card. Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new one right away. Don't just throw the old card away. Be sure to shred it or cut it into small pieces.

For Medicare questions including the new card call SHIIP at the Iowa Insurance Division, 800-351-4664 (TTY: 800-735-2942) or email shiip@iid.iowa.gov.

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