

FRAUD ALERT

NEW MEDICARE CARDS ARRIVING IN 2018

Guard your Medicare card and identity information to avoid scams before the new cards arrive in your mailboxes in 2018.

Here's what you need to know about the new cards:

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will mail new cards to those receiving Medicare benefits beginning in **April 2018 through April 2019**. The new cards will use a unique, randomly assigned code, not your Social Security number. The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 requires the agency to remove Social Security numbers from all Medicare cards by April 2019.
- Seniors do not have to do anything to get a new card.
- The cards will automatically be mailed to all 58 million current beneficiaries. You don't need to do anything special to receive one.
- The new cards will feature a randomly assigned Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) made up of 11 letters and numbers.
- Your benefits won't change under the new MBI.

Medicare is a lifeline for many seniors who are juggling medical bills. Scammers know from experience that it's easy to scare seniors into handing over information. The transition for the new Medicare cards will be happening in phases, so some seniors could get confused and wonder why they didn't get a new card yet. Scams relating to the new card are already surfacing. Some Medicare recipients report getting calls from scammers who tell them that they must pay for the new card and then ask them for their checking account and Medicare card numbers. **Do not give out either number.**

THERE IS NO FEE ASSOCIATED WITH RECEIVING YOUR NEW CARD.

"If you receive a call or an e-mail related to your new card and asking for money or your personal information, it's a scam," says Chuck Danfield Senior Supervisor of the Older Adults Protective Services Program at the Bucks County Area Agency on Aging.

- Medicare isn't going to call you. Social Security isn't going to call you.
- Do not be caught off guard by an odd phone call or e-mail.
- No legitimate agency is going to phone you and ask you for your Social Security number in order to issue you a new Medicare card.
- If you're not sure if the call is legitimate, experts suggest that you hang up and call the agency back on the customer service line, which is 800-633-4227 for Medicare and 800-772-1213 for Social Security.
- Hang up if someone tells you there's a fee of any kind associated with the new Medicare cards.

"We're **removing Social Security numbers** from Medicare cards to prevent fraud, fight identity theft, and keep taxpayer dollars safe," according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' website at www.cms.gov.

Consumer watchdogs have argued for years that Medicare needs to remove Social Security numbers off Medicare cards because of fraud, including medical ID theft. Social Security numbers can be sold over and over again on the dark web used by criminals and can be more valuable to fraudsters than a credit card number.

If you're not sure if the call is legitimate, experts suggest that you hang up and call the agency back on the customer service line, which is 800-633-4227 for Medicare and 800-772-1213 for Social Security.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ONCE YOU DO RECEIVE YOUR NEW CARD, SHRED THE OLD CARD BEFORE THROWING IT OUT.

Monthly Fraud Alerts courtesy of...

Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force

Bucks County District Attorney's Office 215-348-6344	A Woman's Place (AWP) 1-800-220-8116
Bucks County Area Agency on Aging 215-348-0510	Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection 215-348-6060
Bucks County Coroner's Office 215-348-3852	Bucks County Register of Wills 215-348-6265
Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA) 1-800-675-6900	www.crimesaginstolderadultsbucks.org

24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505