



District Attorney's Office • 18th Judicial District

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Fraud Alert

Medicare Imposters Scaring Elders into Paying for Coverage

The indefinite future of health care coverage is being exploited by Medicare and Medicaid imposters who are calling older beneficiaries and threatening to cancel benefits if they don't pay to renew their health insurance cards. In some instances, the offenders also demand personal information, such as Social Security numbers or financial accounts for the purpose of committing Identity theft. Although these scams are more common during Medicare's open enrollment period which takes place in the fall, offenders often ply their trade whenever there is a national event or uncertainty that could threaten the quality of life of particular vulnerable individuals. Among other unsavory characteristics, these con artists are particularly adept at using consumers' anxieties to rip them off. Expect this trend to continue, but don't take the bait! Never give out Medicare or bank account numbers over the phone unless you initiate the call, such as to replace a lost or stolen card.

Facts about Medicare

- ❖ Medicare does not charge to get a new card.
- ❖ Medicare will never call to verify a consumer's account number, or to promote a Medicare product or service.
- ❖ **OF SPECIAL NOTE:** Medicare accounts and Social Security numbers are one in the same, which puts recipients at risk of identity theft. Beginning April, 2018, SSN's are scheduled to be removed from Medicare cards and will be replaced with a randomly selected account number.

If you receive a suspicious call, record the number on your caller ID and report it to SMP Colorado at 1-800-503-5190, or the Office of Inspector General at 1-800-447-8477 or <http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/hotline> .