

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
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CMS NEWS

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Continue to Guard Your Card!

As Medicare Open Enrollment approaches, people with Medicare can help protect themselves and the Medicare program from health care fraud

[En español](#)

As Medicare Open Enrollment approaches the Trump Administration through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is protecting Medicare beneficiaries by reminding them to be vigilant and take precautions to avoid falling victim to healthcare fraud. Scammers are after medical insurance and financial account information and passwords for their monetary gain and may use the increased public outreach activities during Open Enrollment as an opportunity to strike.

Last year, CMS [removed Social Security numbers](#) from all Medicare cards. Ahead of schedule, the agency completed a successful mailing brand new cards with a more secure Medicare number to protect Medicare beneficiaries. Even with this change, CMS is reminding people with Medicare to guard your Medicare card like a credit card, check Medicare claims summary forms for errors, and be wary of unsolicited requests for your Medicare number. Medicare will never call beneficiaries to ask for or check Medicare numbers. To bring heightened public awareness to potential fraud and keeping your private healthcare and financial information safe, CMS is airing a national advertising campaign through October 14, the day before Open Enrollment begins. The [ads](#) will run on television and on digital platforms.

“Health care scammers will go to great lengths to steal from Medicare beneficiaries. That’s why guarding your Medicare card and personal information is essential,” said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. “You can protect yourself by knowing what to look for. Remember, if a caller says they’re from Medicare and asks for your Medicare number or other personal information – hang up. It’s probably a scam. Only give your Medicare number to participating Medicare pharmacists, primary and specialty care doctors or people you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf.”

CMS officials also caution that healthcare fraud is a concern year round and ongoing scams involve fraudulent health care screenings, genetic testing, lab work, and the sale of durable medical equipment (DME) like wheelchairs, walkers, canes and diabetic supplies. Health care

fraud occurs when someone steals or uses your Medicare number to submit fraudulent claims to Medicare without your authorization. It can disrupt your medical care and wastes taxpayer dollars. Remember to take your Medicare card with you for medical appointments and other covered Medicare health care services to ensure your information is filed with correct dates of services rendered and other required claim information.

To protect yourself from fraudsters, CMS offers the following security tips:

- Never accept medical supplies from a door-to-door salesman. If someone comes to your door claiming to be from Medicare, remember that Medicare and Medicaid do not send representatives to your home.
- Never give your Medicare card, Medicare number, Social Security card, or Social Security number to anyone except your doctor or people you know should have it.
- Remember, nothing is ever "free." Never accept offers of money or gifts for free medical care.
- Be wary of providers who tell you that the item or service isn't usually covered, but they "know how to bill Medicare" so Medicare will pay.
- Always check your medications before leaving the pharmacy to be sure you received the correct medication prescribed, including whether it's a brand or generic name. If you don't get your prescription filled correctly, report the problem to the pharmacist.
- Report suspected instances of fraud by [contacting the HHS OIG Hotline](#) or Medicare's toll-free customer service operations at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). You can also go online to find more information at our web resource -- www.medicare.gov/fraud.

For more information on CMS' fraud efforts, including new authorities to stop fraud before it happens, click [here](#).

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