



July 2018 Fraud Prevention Fact

This Fraud Fact from the Missouri SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) addresses phone scams. Telephone scams are prevalent. We want to remind you of some tips to keep the phone from becoming a weapon that fraudsters use against you.

The recent announcement that Medicare is changing your Medicare card number away from your Social Security number has prompted scams. The Medicare numbers are changing, and you will get a new card. However, Missouri's beneficiaries will not see replacement cards for a long time – maybe as late as December. No one from Medicare will call and ask you for information regarding the number change. The only thing you need to do is to make sure the Social Security Administration has your correct mailing address. If someone calls you and says they are from Medicare and need information, hang up the phone.

The same goes for someone who claims to be the IRS. Usually, the scammer tries to pressure you into sending money to the so-called IRS by threatening police to your house to arrest you. The IRS will not call or email you demanding that you send money. The IRS conducts business by mail.

Also, be very wary of anyone asking for charitable donations or selling stuff over the phone. If you do not know the caller, then giving them your credit card number or bank information -- or any other personal information -- is just like handing it to a stranger. Don't do it.

To help prevent any of these from happening to you, sign up for the No Call list at 1-866-662-2551. Another tactic is to let the phone ring when you do not recognize the number on caller ID. If it's important, the caller will leave a message. No matter what, do not give your personal information to anyone who calls you unexpectedly. As always, report suspected Medicare fraud to the Missouri SMP at (888) 515-6565.

This project was supported, in part by grant number 90MPPG0040, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Administration for Community Living policy.