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## ***Latest Medicare Scam***

Law enforcement agencies around the country are posting warning of a phone scam regarding Medicare cards.

Seniors are reporting receiving telephone calls allegedly from Medicare notifying them that new ID cards are issued that are plastic and include a chip to protect them against fraud, like they do with credit cards. The caller asks to verify your Medicare ID number and other personal information, prompting you to provide the information, and then they will repeat it back to you. Many victims report that the callers sound very official, and they often gave an estimate of when the new cards will arrive.

The problem is Medicare is NOT issuing new plastic cards. The scammers want your information so they can steal your identity and potentially access and drain your bank account, open new bank accounts in your name, and take out loans or lines of credit, or sign up for phone plans and other contracts.

It is important to remember: The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) very rarely call individuals directly. If they do call you, it is because you contacted them to report a problem, file a grievance or something similar. CMS staff will not call an individual unsolicited. CMS will mail you information, like your Medicare Card, the Medicare & You handbook and Medicare Summary Notices (MSN). You will get a quarterly bill from CMS for your Medicare Part B premium if you are not collecting Social Security Benefits. These scam calls often say they “are calling regarding your Medicare coverage” or “calling on behalf of Medicare.” This call is NOT coming from CMS or anyone who has your best interests in mind.

If you ever suspect any kind of Medicare fraud, you can call the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General fraud hotline at 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477).

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