



'Care Share

It's Official! Social Security Numbers to be stripped from your Medicare Cards!

Anyone on Medicare is aware that the Medicare number printed on every card is someone's Social Security number. This may have been a good idea when Medicare was created in 1965; however it is long overdue for a change. This has been agreed upon for over a decade now, between the increase in technology use and the ease at which identities can be stolen.

That day has arrived. President Obama has signed a bill just last month that includes the provision to omit the Social Security number from the Medicare card. This will not happen overnight however. It is important to be aware that now that this is going forward, criminals are going to take advantage of it.

There will probably be scams starting almost immediately whereby people will call to tell you they are helping with the change. They will most likely ask for your current Medicare number, among other identifiable pieces of information, and they will sound very authoritative. Here is what you need to know right now:

1. Medicare and Social Security will never call you
2. Medicare officials have up to four years to start issuing cards with new identifiers.
3. They have four more years to reissue cards held by current beneficiaries.

This means nothing will happen right now. ***If someone calls to tell you they're reprocessing cards, issuing new cards, assigning new numbers or anything similar, be on guard.***

As usual, the normal warnings remain. Never give your personal information out over the phone. The phone is no longer the helpful device it used to be, but rather a tool con criminals use against us. If you don't know who is calling by looking at caller ID, let your voicemail pick up the phone. If it is important they will leave a message.

While you wait for the new card numbers to be issued, making your Medicare card safer, be aware of those out to steal your information while taking advantage of these changes. The only way to replace a lost or stolen card currently is through Social Security, see next page for instructions. There is no current way to switch your number, and until there is, if someone calls to tell you they're going to change your Medicare number, please hang up.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) helps to educate Medicare beneficiaries about ways to prevent, detect, and combat Medicare fraud. For more information about Medicare fraud, visit the Stop Medicare Fraud website at www.stopmedicarefraud.gov.

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News Release SOCIAL SECURITY

Social Security Announces New Online Service for Replacement Medicare Cards

Available to Recipients with a *my* Social Security Account

The Social Security Administration introduced the expansion of online services available through its *my* Social Security portal available at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount. Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of Social Security, announced that Medicare beneficiaries can now obtain a replacement card if they have lost, damaged, or simply need to replace it online using a *my* Social Security account.

"I'm excited about this newest online feature to the agency's *my* Social Security portal and the added convenience we're providing Medicare beneficiaries," Acting Commissioner Colvin said. "Any *my* Social Security account holder who misplaces their Medicare card will be able to request a replacement card using their online *my* Social Security account."

Requesting a replacement card through *my* Social Security account is a convenient, cost-effective and secure way to ensure Medicare beneficiaries have a critical piece of identification available when required by medical providers as proof of Medicare coverage. Simply access your online *my* Social Security account at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount and select the "Replacement Documents" tab. Then select "Mail my replacement Medicare card." After you request a card, it will arrive in the mail in approximately 30 days.

my Social Security is a secure, online hub for doing business with Social Security, and more than 19 million people have created a personal account. Current Social Security beneficiaries can manage their account—change an address, adjust direct deposit, obtain a benefit verification letter, or request a replacement SSA-1099. Account holders still in the workforce can verify their earnings, and obtain estimates of future benefits. In addition to those existing services, Medicare beneficiaries will now be able to request a replacement Medicare card without waiting for a replacement form in the mail.

For more information about *my* Social Security or to establish an account visit www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

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