



# 'Care Share

**SCHEMING  
CRAFTY  
AGGRESSIVE  
MALICIOUS**  
DON'T LET THEM CON YOU

## Tips to Protect Yourself Against Health Care Scams

Wednesday, November 13, 2013

**Special Committee on Aging Press Release**

Fraudsters are capitalizing on the rollout of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The shifts in the healthcare landscape, including the overlap of Medicare's annual open enrollment period with the opening of the health-insurance exchanges, have prompted some criminals to carry out health care scams targeting seniors. The fact is that if you have Medicare, you do not need to buy health insurance through the exchanges created by the ACA. And, although it is illegal for someone to sell an exchange health insurance plan to a known Medicare recipient, it hasn't deterred fraudsters from trying.

In many instances, these nefarious operators are trying to con seniors into giving out sensitive information such as a bank account, Social Security, or Medicare number while signing them up for plans they do not need. This was the case for 68 year-old Madeleine Mirzayans of California, who recently shared her story with the [New York Times](#), as well as 69 year-old James Dick of Ohio, who shared his story with [USA Today](#).

As chairman and ranking member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, we have heard too many stories from seniors who have had their identity stolen or been swindled out of their hard-earned life savings, and we are committed to working together to protect our seniors. Below are a few steps seniors can take to avoid falling victim to these fraudsters and identity thieves:

- **Protect your personal information and be suspicious of solicitations.** Never share personal information, such as Medicare, Social Security or bank account information with anyone who contacts you uninvited at your door, over the phone or by e-mail seeking to verify personal information or sell you a health plan.
- **Know that Medicare will never call you at home.** If you receive a call from someone who says they're from Medicare or Social Security, hang up. Medicare and Social Security employees will never call you at home, unless you have contacted them first about a problem. **(con't)**

*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](http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov).*

# Tips, *con't*

- **Use official websites only.** Seniors using the fall Medicare open-enrollment period to shop for prescription drug or Medicare Advantage plans should sign up only through the official Medicare Plan Finder website [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or by phone at 1-800-MEDICARE.
- **Report suspected fraud.** Report any suspected fraud to the local police or your state's attorney general. To report identity theft related crimes contact the Federal Trade Commission at [www.ftc.gov/idtheft](http://www.ftc.gov/idtheft) or by calling 1-877-438-4338. The Senate Special Committee on Aging is also available to help if you have any questions about reporting fraud or need assistance. The committee's anti-fraud hotline is staffed by a team of investigators weekdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST. You can call the toll-free fraud hotline at 1-855-303-9470, or contact us by clicking [here](#).
- **Ask questions.** If it has anything to do with Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE or check out online resources at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). To learn more about Medicare fraud and taking steps to prevent it you can visit [www.stopmedicarefraud.gov](http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov) or contact the Senior Medicare Patrol program in your area by visiting [www.smpresource.org](http://www.smpresource.org).



*Protect yourself from Medicare fraud and have a Happy Holiday!*

## National Headlines

*Click on the links for more information. These are great stories to share.*

### [Medicare scam targeting elderly](#) KSDK

A Ferguson woman has a warning. She got a call Friday from someone telling her she needed a new **Medicare** card. But when they asked for her bank ...

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### [Hingham Officials Warn of Medicare Scam](#) Patch.com

"This **scam** involved a senior citizen who received a phone call from a person claiming to be a **Medicare** employee," HPD reported. The 'employee' said ...

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### [Texas Healthcare System Settles Medicare Fraud Case](#) D

Healthcare Daily  
San Antonio's Baptist Health System has paid nearly \$3.7 million to settle allegations that it filed false claims for **Medicare** reimbursements, the U.S. Attorney's ...

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### [Nursing-home firm to pay \\$48 million to settle Medicare fraud case](#) Los Angeles Times

A Mission Viejo-based nursing-home operator has agreed to pay \$48 million to settle allegations that he submitted inflated bills to **Medicare** for therapy sessions ...

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