



Iowa Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

a Project of *Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A)*

March 2017 News You Can Use

NEW MEDICARE CARDS

Starting next year a major change will be occurring in Medicare. A new randomly generated Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI) will replace the social security number. When this gets under way, all Medicare beneficiaries will be assigned a new MBI and be sent a new Medicare card.

The primary goal of the initiative is to decrease Medicare beneficiaries' vulnerability to identity theft by removing the social security number from their Medicare cards and replacing it with a new Medicare MBI that does not contain any other personal information.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) the agency that oversees Medicare, has established a transition period during which the Medicare number or MBI will be accepted from providers, beneficiaries, plans and others. CMS expects the transition period to run from April 2018 through December 31, 2019. After the transition period only the MBI will be used.

Starting around April 2018, CMS will start mailing new Medicare cards. There are approximately 60 million beneficiaries in Medicare. So, CMS will possibly mail the cards in phases over a period of time. Remember, as a beneficiary you can still use your current Medicare number during the transition period if it takes a while to receive your new Medicare card.

The Iowa Senior Medicare Patrol (IA SMP) wants all Medicare beneficiaries to be aware of possible fraud and scams relating to the new Medicare cards. Remember, CMS and Medicare will NEVER contact you by phone or email to ask for personal information relating to the issuance of the new Medicare card. Any such contact is a SCAM. Don't be taken in.

There is no charge for the issuance of the new Medicare cards. Anyone seeking to have a beneficiary pay money for the new card is a SCAMMER. Be especially careful of anyone seeking to have access to your checking account to pay any fee for the new card. There will be scams on this process, spread the word and do not fall victim to scammers.

Iowa Senior Medicare Patrol is currently educating beneficiaries at its outreach events to prepare for this change. The issuance of the new Medicare card is a significant change. If you have questions regarding this change, do not hesitate to call IA SMP at 1-800-423-2449.



News distributed by Iowa Senior Medicare Patrol Program, Northeast Iowa Area Agency on Aging (NEI3A), Waterloo, IA, IowaSMP@nei3a.org 1-800-423-2449.

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