

'Care Share SCAM WATCH

Montanans continue to receive unsolicited calls which come in a variety of flavors. Regardless of who is on the other end of the line, where they say they are calling from, or what they want, they all have something in common. Let's see if you can tell what it is.

One caller from Great Falls stated she is receiving multiple calls a day, from varying numbers, bombarding her with the same message to take away her Medicare Savings Program. How they got the information that she is on SLMB, (one of three Medicare Savings Programs) is a mystery. Thankfully, the person on Medicare did not share her information and told them that "the only way she'd believe that is if she were to receive a letter from the State." She did the exact right thing by hanging up and reporting it to SMP.

Another caller from Missoula received a call with the words "MSLA Aging Svcs" on her caller ID. Thinking this was her local Area Agency on Aging, she picked up. On the other end was an aggressive person attempting to sell car insurance. She did the right thing by hanging up and calling Missoula Aging Services directly to report the call.

Another caller from Helena received both a back brace and a knee brace in the mail. She hadn't ordered anything, and though she did remember talking to someone trying to sell her medical equipment, she did not give out her Medicare number. This means they already had her Medicare number by other means and should expect to see this paid for by Medicare when she receives her next Medicare Summary Notice (MSN). She did the right thing by telling a family member who reported it to SMP and will now watch for the MSN.

These calls all have something in common. Regardless of the situation, they were all asking for personally identifiable information.

An unsolicited caller asking for personal information, whether they're doing a survey or trying to sell you something, is always a red flag. Often, they are missing one piece of information. It could be a birthdate, it could be the Medicare number, other health ID numbers, or an account number for example.

When you fall prey to consumer scams and give out your Medicare number, your Medicare number would be considered "compromised." If this happens, call

1-800-Medicare to request a new card and contact MT SMP.

The best course of action when receiving unsolicited calls is to not pick up. Answering spoofed calls alerts the scam artist that your phone number is active and will likely lead to more unwanted calls.

I received calls showing from Red Lodge on my caller ID, which is where I frequently call and receive calls from. Since I didn't recognize the number, I typed it into my internet browser and found information that made it clear I was not receiving a call from Red Lodge Montana. Scam artists spoof local and in-state numbers in the hope their calls will appear familiar enough to entice the recipient to answer.

Scam calls are not going to stop anytime soon. Learn to recognize them and never give out your personal information to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.

Contact MT SMP at 1-800-551-3191 if you gave out your Medicare or other health ID number; received boxes of braces, testing kits, or

other medical supplies in the mail that you did not request; were contacted by a debt collection company for a provider bill you do not owe; or see something suspicious on your Medicare Summary Notice. These are all signs that your medical identity is at risk.

You can create a free account at Medicare.gov to check your claims and catch any errors, fraud, or abuse right away. Otherwise, please open and review your MSN or Medicare Advantage EOB when they arrive in the mail.

Be aware, watch for new scams, and report anything suspicious to the local Montana SMP office in your community at 1-800-551-3191.

3 REASONS TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT AT MEDICARE.GOV



- ✓ Print your Medicare card.
- ✓ View claims as soon as they are available.
- ✓ Check your enrollment status to be sure you are in the correct plan and not incorrectly enrolled in hospice.



SUPPORTED BY GRANT # 90MPRC0002 FROM ACL

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.org.