



*My Health.  
My Medicare.*

## **Fact Sheet – Tips for Preventing Fraud and Identity Theft**

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### **2010 Medicare Open Enrollment**

#### **Guarding Against Identity Theft**

Identity theft is a serious crime that happens when personal information is used without consent to commit fraud or other crimes. Personal information includes a person's name, Social Security number or credit card number. Individual Medicare ID numbers can also be used to commit fraud and identity theft.

#### **Putting a Stop to Billing Fraud**

Most doctors, pharmacists, suppliers, insurance providers, and other health care providers who work with Medicare are honest. Unfortunately, there may be some who are dishonest. Medicare fraud happens when Medicare is billed for services or supplies that beneficiaries never receive. Medicare fraud costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year.

#### **Tips for Consumers**

Medicare is committed to helping protect beneficiaries from fraud and identity theft and offers the following suggestions:

- Protect your Medicare Number, which is located on your Medicare card. Treat your Medicare card like it is a credit card. Do not ever give it out except to your doctor or other Medicare provider. Never give your Medicare or Medicaid number in exchange for free medical equipment or any other free offer. Dishonest providers could use your number to get payment for services they never delivered.
- If someone comes to your door claiming to be from Medicare or Medicaid, remember that Medicare and Medicaid do not send representatives to your home.
- Ask questions! You have a right to know everything about your medical care, including the costs billed to Medicare.



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- Educate yourself about Medicare. Know your rights and know what a provider can and cannot bill to Medicare.
- Use a calendar to record all of your doctor's appointments and what tests or X-rays you get. Then check your Medicare statements carefully to make sure you got each service listed and that all the details are correct.
- Be cautious of any provider or plan representative who says he has been approved by the Federal government.
- Be wary of providers who tell you that the item or service is not usually covered, but they "know how to bill Medicare" so that Medicare will pay.
- Make sure you understand how a plan works before you join.
- Always check your pills before you leave the pharmacy to be sure you got the full amount. If you do not get your full prescription, report the problem to the pharmacist.
- Review your Medicare payment notice for errors. The payment notice shows what services or supplies were billed to Medicare, what Medicare paid, and what you owe. Make sure Medicare was not billed for health care services or medical supplies and equipment you did not receive. If you spend time in a hospital, make sure the admission date, discharge date, and diagnosis on your bill are correct.
- Report suspected instances of fraud by calling 1-800-633-4227 (1-800-MEDICARE). If a beneficiary believes they are a victim of fraud or identity theft they should contact 1-800-HHS-TIPS (1-800-447-8477)/(TTY #: 1-800-377-4950) to report the incident. More information is available at [www.stopmedicarefraud.gov](http://www.stopmedicarefraud.gov)

**More information about Medicare prescription drug and health plans  
is available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or by calling  
1-800-633-4227 (1-800-MEDICARE)/(TTY 1-877-486-2048).**