

Mid-April 2008

# FRAUD ALERT!

## *Medicare “new card” and “drug coverage” Scam*

If you know someone who receives Medicare health benefits, this is an important piece of information to pass along. Con artists are calling senior citizens and telling them that their medical benefits are ending. In addition, senior citizens are told that they have a certain amount of time to get a new card because their current card is inactive AND if they don't act immediately, they won't receive their social security check or direct deposit.

This threat scares many seniors into divulging their checking account number. Minutes after the phone call ends, crooks empty the checking account of the unsuspecting senior. If someone claims to be calling from the Social Security Administration (SSA) / Medicare and asks for your bank account, credit cards, or life insurance policy numbers, **do not** provide any information over the phone. Social Security / Medicare will never ask for that information, and the only time someone calling from the SSA will ask for your Social Security number is if you applied for low-income assistance and the number you put on your application was incorrect.

Medicare also advises seniors to be wary of individuals who approach them, claiming to represent Medicare, with offers of good deals on Medicare prescription drug coverage. These individuals will ask the seniors for their personal financial information in order to complete the application process.

### *How to Avoid Being the Victim of a Medicare Scam*

- Be wary of door-to-door salespeople. No one is authorized to come to your door uninvited, with the purpose of selling you Medicare prescription drug coverage. Agents cannot solicit business at your home without an appointment. Do not let them into your home.
- Do not give out personal information, such as Social Security, bank account numbers or credit card numbers to anyone you have not verified is a licensed agent. Legitimate companies who sell Medicare prescription drug policies are not authorized to request personal health or financial information during marketing activities. Medicare would not ask for payment over the phone or internet.
- Protect your Medicare number like your credit cards and bank accounts. Never give to strangers.
- Before you reveal personal information or sign a contract, confirm that the company is legitimate. Medicare has a list of approved companies so it's easy to confirm that the company and coverage you choose is legitimate before you sign up or reveal financial information. All of the approved Medicare prescription plans are available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) or 1-800-MEDICARE.
- If a salesperson pressures you to provide personal information over the phone or in person – do not provide any information – hang up or ask the “salesperson” to leave right away.

### *To avoid being a victim, verify before you buy*

#### BUCKS COUNTY CRIMES AGAINST OLDER ADULTS TASK FORCE

#### FIGHTING ABUSE, NEGLECT, AND EXPLOITATION OF OLDER ADULTS IN BUCKS COUNTY

**Bucks County District Attorney's Office**

215-348-6344

**Bucks County Consumer Protection**

215-348-6060

**Bucks County Register of Wills**

215-348-6265

**Bucks County Area Agency on Aging**

215-348-0510

**Network of Victim Assistance**

1-800-675-6900

**Bucks County Coroner**

215-348-3852