

Senior GAZETTE

Winter 2019

by Lynda Ashley, Director, Amherst Township Senior Service Office (ATSSO)

Clarification on Reissuance of Medicare Numbers

Many of you have heard that a group of Medicare beneficiaries recently received new Medicare numbers from CMS because of a "breach" of some sort. **This was not a breach of data.** It was actually a proactive step that CMS took after recent enforcement actions and a great example of the benefit we gain from the new cards. It is nice to see CMS using their ability to issue new cards in a proactive manner such as this. Here is the note from CMS providing more details:

"As the result of recent fraud takedowns, CMS identified a group of beneficiaries whose Medicare numbers were being fraudulently used to bill Medicare for unnecessary medical equipment and services. To protect them from Medicare fraud, they received new cards with new Medicare number with an accompanying letter that explained the situation and next steps."

The majority of beneficiaries should have received their new cards by the end of last week. This should not impact their access to care or ability to enroll in Medicare plans during Open Enrollment. People who have concerns or experience a problem should call **1-800-MEDICARE** for assistance.

When people with Medicare receive their new card in the mail, it is important that they:

- Securely destroy their old card with the compromised Medicare number.
- Share their new Medicare number with their health care providers.
- Start using their new Medicare card right away.
- Protect their Medicare number just like a credit card.

ATSSO OFFICE HOURS:
8:00 A.M. – NOON (M-F)
Phone: 988-5894 – Ext. 101
Email: amhersttwpseniors@gmail.com

2020 MEDICARE CHANGES

Medicare Part A and B deductibles will increase beginning January 2020.

Part:		For 2020
A	Inpatient deductible	\$1408.00 per benefit period
Hospital Co Pay:	61-90 days	\$352.00/day
	90-150 days	\$704.00/day
B	*Premium:	\$144.60*
	Deductible:	\$198.00
	Co pays:	20%
Skilled Nursing Co pay:	Days 21-100	\$176.00/day

*Part B premium is based on income, some may pay more.

Home-Delivered Meal Program

ATSSO provides home-delivered meals for those over 60 and disabled adults over 18, with a cost that is adjusted according your income. This nutritious, hot lunch program includes your choice of an entrée, soup & sandwich, soup & salad, or soup. If you would like to receive a home-delivered meal or need more information, please contact the Senior Service Office at 988-5894, ext101.

Beware of Social Security Scams!!

Social Security phone scams are the #1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission and Social Security. Over the past year, these scams — misleading victims into making cash or gift card payments to avoid arrest for Social Security number problems — have skyrocketed. Social Security encourages you to use the new online form (*see box*) to report Social Security phone scams to disrupt the scammers and help us reduce this type of fraud, and reduce the number of victims.

"We are taking action to raise awareness and prevent scammers from harming Americans," said Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security. "I am deeply troubled that our country has not been able to stop these crooks from deceiving some of the most vulnerable members of our society."

Social Security employees will occasionally contact you by telephone or mail for business purposes if you have ongoing business with the agency. However, Social Security employees will not:

- Tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended.
- Contact you to demand an immediate payment.
- Ask you for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Require a specific means of debt repayment, like a prepaid debit card, a retail gift card, or cash.

- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money.

Remember that Social Security employees will never threaten you. If there's a problem with your Social Security record, Social Security will mail you a letter. If Social Security needs you to submit payments, the agency will provide instructions in the letter, including options to make those payments

"Awareness is our best hope to thwart the scammers," said Gail Ennis, Inspector General for Social Security. "Tell your friends and family about them and report them to us when you receive them, but most importantly, just hang up and ignore the call and protect their Medicare number just like a credit card.

Posted on November 19, 2019 by Mike Korbey, Deputy Commissioner for Communications

To report a Social Security phone scam go to the "Office of the Inspector General's" website at:

www.oig.ssa.gov

Once there look under:

Report Fraud, Waste, or Abuse

Then select "Submit a Report" and click on the box that says:

Report Social Security Phone Scams