

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO. -- Two Medicare telephone scams have resurfaced in Colorado and citizens are asked to be on the alert when receiving phone calls about Medicare.

The caller claims to represent Medicare or a business that provides Medicare services. He or she asks for personal information, such as a Medicare number or bank routing information.

The Colorado SMP Medicare Fraud and Abuse Program reminds consumers that no one from Medicare will ever telephone individuals to ask for a Medicare number or banking information.

In one situation people called claiming to represent Medicare, Social Security or another government organization and asked for bank routing information to charge Medicare premiums.

This is happening nationwide. The caller gives a name that sounds official, such as "National Medical Office" or "Medicare National Office," and tells the consumer that they are getting a new Medicare card and will be charged a one-time fee for their Medicare premiums or prescription drug plan. The caller asks for banking information or a credit card number and is quite insistent that their Medicare will be canceled if they do not give the information.

In another scenario the caller says they represent a durable medical equipment (DME) company that provides medical supplies such as a wheelchair or walker. DME suppliers are not allowed to "cold call" consumers to get orders for supplies.

A report was received from a Fort Collins consumer who got a call from someone who said they were a DME supplier and wanted to take an order over the phone. This could have been someone wanting to defraud Medicare with a fake order or someone just wanting to get the consumer's Medicare number or banking information.

Medicare representatives may contact Medicare consumers to ask survey questions about benefits, but the caller will not ask the consumer for his or her Medicare number or banking information.

Medicare fraud wastes money every year, resulting in higher health care costs for all.