

# TIPS TO STAY SAFE FROM MEDICARE SCAMS

CREATED BY THE TEAM AT CYBER LIGHT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CALIFORNIA HEALTH ADVOCATES

## MEDICARE SCAMS IN A BROAD SENSE

- Medicare loses approximately \$60 billion each year to fraud
- Scammers Sound Legitimate: Fraudsters may have personal details like your name, address, birthday, and doctor's names, making them appear trustworthy
- Scams Are Common: These scams happen daily, but by staying alert and following these simple tips, you can keep your information safe!



## WATCH OUT FOR THESE SCAMS!

### New Card With Benefits Scam

Be on the lookout for scammers claiming that Medicare wants to send you a new card. They may ask for your Medicare number or other personal information. Some might even tell you that Medicare is switching to a new plastic card or a card with a fancy computer chip. Don't be fooled! Medicare will never call you to verify your information. Medicare cards are always paper-based and will remain that way. If you receive any calls like this, hang up and report it.

### "Free" Medical Equipment Scam

Watch out for calls offering "free" medical equipment, like back or ankle braces, supposedly covered by Medicare. Hang up—this is a scam. Only accept equipment your doctor has ordered. If unrequested items arrive, refuse delivery or return them, keeping a record of the sender and return date. Sharing your Medicare number could lead to fraud, denied claims, and unwanted items. Stay cautious and double-check before accepting any offers.

### Hospice Enrollment Scam

Scammers may approach you in person, offering things like groceries, a walker, or even cash in exchange for your Medicare number and a signature. Don't sign anything—it's a scam. They'll fraudulently enroll you in unnecessary hospice services, charging Medicare for fake expenses. This could jeopardize your Medicare coverage, affect access to medications, and disrupt medical appointments. Always protect your Medicare info and never share it with anyone you don't trust.

### Romance & AI Scams

Scammers often use romance to manipulate people into sharing personal information. If someone you meet online is hesitant to meet face-to-face or over video, it's a red flag. Another tactic they use is AI to impersonate a friendly voice, usually a woman named Suzy, Ella, or Sarah. They may claim you're eligible for a "flex card," a "food card," reduced medical bills, or \$180 cash back each month—all at no cost to you! It's a scam. If you receive such a call, hang up and don't share any personal details. Trust your instincts and stay safe!

## HOW TO STAY PROTECTED

- **Medicare will never contact you to verify your information.** If you receive a suspicious call, hang up immediately and avoid speaking to the scammer to prevent them from recording your voice or responses.
- **Only share your information when you directly contact Medicare.** Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or visit the official website: [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov).
- **Leave your Medicare card at home.** Your healthcare providers already have access to your information, so there's no need to carry it with you.
- **Beware of threats to "cancel" your Medicare coverage.** Scammers may threaten to cancel your coverage unless you provide personal information. Hang up immediately if you receive such a call.
- **Question unexpected bills.** If you receive a bill from a hospital or medical provider for services you didn't receive, contact Medicare to report it.
- **Report fraud.** Report Medicare fraud to Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at 855-613-7080.

## WANT TO LEARN MORE?

VISIT US ON OUR WEBSITE: [CALIFORNIASMP.ORG](https://www.CALIFORNIASMP.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO HELP PROTECT YOURSELF FROM MEDICARE SCAMS