



Medicare Telemarketing Calls

How the Scam Works

Regardless of the method, the scammer's goal is to steal your personal information for their personal benefit. Some of the most popular versions reported to BBB Scam Tracker are below:

- When you pick up the phone, a Medicare impersonator offers you something for free, such as a back or knee brace. All you have to do is share some personal information, such as your Social Security number, to "confirm" your identity.
- Some versions capitalize on the rollout of new Medicare cards, which started in April 2018 and will continue through April 2019. The delivery of the new cards is staggered, so you will receive your card at a different time than your friends or neighbors.
- In another version, scammers attempt to intimidate you by claiming there is a problem with your Medicare or Social Security benefits. They may claim there has been suspicious activity on your account and if you don't give them the information they need right away, you are in danger of losing your benefits or worse.
- Sometimes, scammers use robocalls to tell you there is a problem and ask you to call a different number to resolve it.

How to Protect Yourself

- **Don't answer calls from unknown numbers.** If you receive a call from a number you haven't saved to your contacts, or if your caller ID says "unknown," don't pick up the phone. Also, be aware that scammers can dupe caller ID and mask their true phone number. A legitimate caller or contact will generally leave you a voicemail and request you return their call. And if they know they are calling your cell phone most family and friends will text you.
- **When in doubt, hang up.** If you do answer a call from an unsolicited caller and are greeted by a robocall or even a person who claims to be with a government agency, just hang up. Don't press any buttons, don't engage in conversation and don't ask to be removed from the calling list.
- **Know how government agencies work.** Government agencies don't call consumers unsolicited. Instead, they send letters if they need to contact you. Also, the new Medicare cards are being provided free of charge.

For More Information

If you receive a particularly convincing call from someone claiming to be an SSA employee, hang up and call their toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213 to verify the issue. Likewise, you can call 1-800-MEDICARE to verify Medicare issues.