



## CONSUMER WARNING

### Beware of Medicare Scams as \$250 Rebate Checks Go Out

#### How does the Medicare scam work?

The recent mailing of \$250 rebate checks to participants in Medicare's drug program has given scammers a new opportunity to take advantage of seniors and other Medicare recipients. In this latest scam, Medicare recipient receive a call from a con artist claiming to be a Medicare representative. The scammer then tells each recipient that they need to provide personal information, such as their Social Security number and bank account number, in order to receive their rebate check. In reality, the scammers need this information to gain access to the recipient's bank account and empty it.

#### What are the rebate checks?

The \$250 Medicare rebate checks are part of the recently enacted health care reform package, and are intended to help close the coverage gap (or "doughnut hole") in Medicare's prescription drug program. The checks are mailed automatically—you do not need to provide any personal information to receive them. The first of these tax-free checks were mailed the second week of June. Additional mailings are scheduled to go out as more recipients hit the doughnut hole, so remain alert in the months ahead!

#### What should you do?

Never give out personal information over the phone, unless *you* initiated the call and you know the person with whom you are speaking. Remember—con artists will stop at nothing to steal your personal information, and often devise new scams to exploit the confusion surrounding changes in public benefits programs.

If someone posing as a Medicare representative attempts to solicit your personal information, you should report them immediately by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Also, if you believe you've been a victim of a Medicare scam, please contact the Illinois Attorney General's Senior Consumer Fraud Hotline at 1-800-243-5377 or 1-800-964-3013 (TTY) to file a consumer fraud complaint.

Help us spread the word! Education is the best prevention!

