

FIGHT BACK!

Medical Identity Theft & Medicare Fraud

OIG

What Is Medical Identity Theft?

Medical identity theft occurs when someone steals your personal information (like your name, Social Security number, or Medicare number) to obtain medical care, buy drugs, or submit fake billings to Medicare in your name. Medical identity theft can disrupt your life, damage your credit rating, and waste taxpayer dollars. The damage can be life-threatening to you if wrong information ends up in your personal medical records.

Tips to Avoid Medical ID Theft Deter, Detect, Defend

DETER

Protect Your Personal Information

- *Guard your Medicare and Social Security numbers carefully.* Treat them like you would treat your credit cards.
- *Be suspicious* of anyone who offers you free medical equipment or services and then requests your Medicare number. If it's free, they don't need your number!
- *Do not let anyone borrow or pay* to use your Medicare ID card or your identity. It's illegal and it's not worth it!
- If your Medicare card is lost or stolen, report it right away. Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) for a replacement.

DETECT

Watch Out For These Common Fraud Schemes

- *Just walk away* if someone approaches you in parking lots, shopping centers, or other public areas and offers you free services, groceries, transportation, or other items in exchange for your Medicare number.
- *Simply hang up the phone* if someone calls you claiming to be conducting a health survey and asks for your Medicare number.
- *Don't give information* to telephone marketers who pretend to be from Medicare or Social Security and ask for payment over the phone or Internet. They may want to steal your money.

DEFEND

Check All Your Medical Bills, Medicare Summary Notices, Explanation Of Benefits, and Credit Reports

- Were you charged for any medical services or equipment that you didn't get?
- Do the dates of services and charges look unfamiliar?
- Were you billed for the same thing twice?
- Does your credit report show any unpaid bills for medical services or equipment you didn't receive?
- Have you received any collection notices for medical services or equipment you didn't receive?

Get help reading your Medicare Summary Notice at

www.medicare.gov/basics/SummaryNotice.asp

Get a free credit report each year by calling 1-877-322-8228

Report Medicare Fraud and Medical Identity Theft

- If you spot unusual or questionable charges, contact your health care provider. It may just be a mistake.
- If your complaint is not resolved by your provider, report the questionable charges to Medicare.
- If you suspect Medicare fraud, contact the Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General.
- If you think someone is misusing your personal information, contact the Federal Trade Commission.

WHO TO CONTACT

Department of Health & Human Services Office of Inspector General Hotline

Report suspected Medicare fraud:

Phone: 1-800-447-8477 (1-800-HHS-TIPS) TTY: 1-800-377-4950	FAX: 1-800-223-8164
E-mail: HHSTips@oig.hhs.gov	Online: OIG.HHS.gov/fraud/hotline

Medicare Call Center and SMPs

Report questionable charges to Medicare:

Phone: 1-800-633-4227 (1-800-MEDICARE) TTY: 1-877-486-2048	Online: medicare.gov
---	--

You can also contact your local SMPs (formerly Senior Medicare Patrols). They work locally to empower seniors to fight health care fraud and resolve errors.

Phone: 1-877-808-2468	E-mail: info@smpresource.org
-----------------------	--

Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Hotline

Report misuse of your personal information:

Phone: 1-877-438-4338 (1-877-ID-THEFT) TTY: 1-866-653-4261	Online: FTC.gov/idtheft
---	--

For more on medical identity theft: www.WorldPrivacyForum.org/medicalidentitytheft.html

For more information and a printable brochure: www.StopMedicareFraud.gov and www.OIG.HHS.gov