


As New Medicare Cards Roll Out, DFTA Hosts Anti-Scam Event

 **MEDICARE HEALTH INSURANCE**

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BROOKLYN, NY (Aug. 21, 2018) – The Department for the Aging (DFTA) joined Deputy Mayor Herminia Palacio, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon Tuesday to alert older New Yorkers about the mailing of new Medicare cards without Social Security numbers. These cards, with identifiers made up of numbers and letters, are being mailed automatically to beneficiaries through December.

This change means thieves will have one less way to target seniors for financial crimes. During the City Hall in Your Borough event at the Park Slope Center for Successful Aging, one Medicare beneficiary described how she received a call from someone posing as a Medicare representative. The scammer told the senior that she should have already received her new Medicare card and asked for the number on the old card, which would have been the senior's Social Security number. The senior declined, and the caller hung up. Not everyone is as savvy, and older Americans lose nearly \$37 billion each year to financial scams and abuse, according to some estimates.



“Financial crimes threaten the life savings, peace of mind and even the physical well-being of seniors. Through our network of senior centers and by partnering with other aging services providers, we are letting victims know that there is no shame in seeking help,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado**. “We are also putting scammers on notice that we won’t stand for the callous mistreatment of older New Yorkers.”

“Protecting New York City’s seniors against identity theft could not be more important,” said **Dr. Herminia Palacio, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**. “Armed with a senior’s personal information, thieves can steal financial and medical information and wreak havoc on the lives of older New Yorkers. As new Medicare cards are rolled out, I encourage all

New Yorkers to be vigilant against fraud and scams, and reach out for help if they believe they have been the victim of a crime.”

“Scams have become more prevalent as of late, and New Yorkers should be aware of them and the resources available to them,” said **Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Lorelei Salas**. “Consumer Affairs offers tips on our website on how older New Yorkers can protect their finances, links to resources such as free financial counseling, and more. We applaud the Department for the Aging for taking these crucial steps to prevent fraud and implore all New Yorkers to be savvy and stay alert.”

“CMS is committed to putting patients first and improving the health care experience in the Medicare program. That commitment includes protecting people by fighting fraudulent activities that threaten taxpayer dollars and people’s identity. CMS began mailing newly designed Medicare cards in New York in late July. The new cards have a unique, randomly generated identifier created to replace the Social Security-based number on the old card. Medicare will automatically mail the new card to you. You don’t need to do anything to get the new card. Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away,” said **Ray Hurd, Regional Administrator and Deputy Consortium Administrator with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services**.

Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon said, “I am thrilled that the new Medicare cards will no longer include Social Security numbers in order to protect seniors’ identities. I encourage all New Yorkers to be hyper aware of any potential fraud during this process. Thank you DFTA and Deputy Mayor Palacio for your dedication to educating New Yorkers about these important issues.”

In addition to hosting the Medicare card event, DFTA will continue to raise awareness as it counsels Medicare beneficiaries in multiple languages at 33 free Health Insurance Information, Counseling, and Assistance Program (HIICAP) sites across the City. Over the past year, HIICAP has made more than 10,000 client contacts, helping older New Yorkers navigate their Medicare health care choices.

For seniors who may have fallen victim to financial and other types of crimes, DFTA’s Elderly Crime Victims Resource Center offers counseling and help. Both are reachable by calling 311.

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The New York City Department for the Aging works to eliminate ageism and ensure the dignity and quality of life of New York City’s diverse 1.6 million older adults. DFTA also works to support caregivers through service, advocacy, and education. DFTA is the largest area agency on aging in the U.S.

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