



PRESS RELEASE



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Protecting Yourself and Your Medicare Benefits *Florida's SHINE Program Warns Against Scams*

TALLAHASSEE – Elder citizens are frequent targets of Medicare schemes, including the latest identity theft scheme. Recently, several Medicare beneficiaries have received phone calls from individuals declaring to be from the “Health and Welfare Department” informing them that a new Medicare card will soon be issued to them. Beneficiaries are then asked to verify some personal information, including their Medicare number, address, birth date, and banking information. Seniors, and those who care for them, should know that the true goal of these calls is **identity theft**.

Medicare, and its authorized agents like the Florida Department of Elder Affairs’ SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Program, will not contact you through unsolicited calls, emails, or visits. We also will not ask for personal identifiers unless you contact us directly for assistance. SHINE counselors provide free, unbiased, and confidential insurance counseling and education regarding Medicare rights, options, and prescription drug assistance for elders, their families, and caregivers.

While the state’s SHINE Program is a trusted community source, there are some organizations and individuals who should not be granted access to personal information. If you suspect the program or individual asking for your information is not legitimate, do not give them your information. Report the incident to the Senior Medicare Patrol project immediately at 1-866-357-6677.

To learn more about the SHINE Program or receive free help from SHINE, individuals may visit designated SHINE counseling sites, attend enrollment events in local communities, or contact SHINE’s trained volunteer counselors at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337). For a listing of SHINE counseling sites and enrollment events, visit www.FloridaSHINE.org.

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