

New Medicare Cards

The Social Security Administration will be issuing new Medicare cards. This is because the Medicare number in the old system was based on Social Security numbers (SSN). Recent legislation requires the removal of the SSN from the Medicare card to protect against the risk of identity theft. Beginning this year, the SSN will be replaced with a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI). The new number is made up of 11 uppercase letters and numbers. The MBI is unique, randomly generated, and the characters will be non-intelligent, i.e. they do not have any hidden or special meaning. Neither the new Medicare numbers nor the new cards will change Medicare benefits.

If you are already enrolled in Medicare, and your address is up-to-date, you will automatically receive your new card between April 2018 and April 2019. If your mailing address is not current, call 800-772-1213, visit www.myssa.gov, or go to your local Social Security office to correct it. There is no charge for the new card.

Once you get your new card, keep it safe, as you would with credit cards and other insurance cards. After you receive your new card, safely destroy your old card. Bring your new card with you when you visit your health care providers. Once your new card is issued, your providers will be able to bill Medicare under your MBI. There will be a transition period, between April 2018 and December 2019, during which providers will be able to bill Medicare on either your old or new number. Starting in January 2020, however, providers will only be able to use the new MBI.

There is concern about scams aimed at taking advantage of people who are confused about the transition to the new cards. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

1. Social Security and Medicare already have your personal identification information. Unless you ask them to, the Social Security Administration will never call, email or visit you. You will NEVER be asked for your Medicare number or any other personal information in order to receive your new card.
2. There is no charge for your new card. No one should contact you and request payment to assist you in obtaining it.
3. You should continue to check your billing statements, Medicare Summary Notices and Explanations of Benefits. Look for any suspicious charges. Use a calendar to track your doctors appointments and services so that you can quickly spot fraud or billing mistakes.

If anyone contacts you requesting personal information or payment related to the new card, call 1-800-MEDICARE to report the activity.