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New Medicare Cards Coming Your Way

As the need to ward off scams and identity theft ever increases, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is now required to remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from all Medicare Cards by April 2019. The new cards will use a unique, randomly-assigned number called a Medicare Beneficiary Identifier (MBI), to replace the Social Security-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) currently used on the Medicare card.

New cards are now being mailed out across the United States, however Kansas residents are in the third wave of mailings and can expect theirs after June 2018. Additional details on timing will be available as the mailings progress.

Here's a sneak peek of what the card will look like:



Here's How to Get Ready:

- Make sure your mailing address is up to date. If your address needs to be corrected, contact Social Security at ssa.gov/myaccount or 1-800-772-1213. TTY users can call 1-800-325-0778.
- Beware of anyone who contacts you about your new Medicare card. Medicare will never ask you to give personal or private information to get your new Medicare Number and card.

10 things to Know About Your New Medicare Card

1. Your new card will automatically come to you. You don't need to do anything as long as your address is up to date.
2. Your new card will have a new Medicare Number that's unique to you, instead of your Social Security Number. This will help to protect your identity.
3. Your Medicare coverage and benefits will stay the same.
4. Mailing takes time. Your card may arrive at a different time than your friend's or neighbor's.
5. Your new card is paper, which is easier for many providers to use and copy.

6. Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away.
7. If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), your Medicare Advantage Plan ID card is your main card for Medicare—you should still keep and use it whenever you need care. However, you also may be asked to show your new Medicare card, so you should carry this card too.
8. Doctors, other health care providers and facilities know it's coming and will ask for your new Medicare card when you need care, so carry it with you.
9. Only give your new Medicare Number to doctors, pharmacists, other health care providers, your insurers, or people you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf.
10. If you forget your new card, you, your doctor or other health care provider may be able to look up your Medicare Number online.

Providers and beneficiaries will both be able to use secure look up tools that will support quick access to MBIs when they need them. There will also be a 21-month transition period where providers will be able to use either the MBI or the HICN further easing the transition.

If you are approaching retirement and/or Medicare age (65), a Medicare Basics class is being offered on April 13 at 2:00 p.m. at the Dorothy Bramlage Public Library. This 2-hour program will cover the two components of original Medicare – Part A and B, as well as the additional parts that have been added since the Medicare Act of 1965 – Part C and D. An overview of how to determine what Supplement policy or Medicare Advantage option (Part C) is best for you and how to shop around for the best option. You will also learn how to select a prescription plan that works best for your unique medication needs. The class is being offered by Geary County K-State Research & Extension Agent, Deb Andres, who holds a certification for providing Medicare Counseling to individuals who are navigating this complex retirement benefit.

If you are interested in registering for the upcoming Medicare Basics class or for additional information, contact the Geary County K-State Research & Extension office at 785-238-4161. Pre-registration for the **free** Medicare Basics program is required in order to attend. Call the Extension office by April 11 to reserve your space at the workshop.