



NEWS RELEASE

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FRAUD ALERT: Oklahoma seniors targeted by phone

OKLAHOMA CITY — Senior citizens in southwestern Oklahoma are being targeted with a phone scam concerning Medicare cards. This scam is specifically targeting seniors because they are the ones who would have and rely on Medicare cards.

Callers are informing seniors there are new Medicare cards being sent but information for direct deposit is needed. The scammer asks which bank the senior uses and then provides its routing number before demanding the account number from the senior. Routing numbers, the first set of numbers on the bottom of the check, are available online to the general public and allows scammers to give the impression they are officials of Medicare. When the scammers encounter resistance to provide an account number, they will threaten to withhold the “new Medicare” card.

“Just remember, though these scammers may initially sound official, a representative from Medicare will never ask for your private financial information by phone,” said Elaine Dodd, Oklahoma Bankers Association vice president – fraud. “If someone seems pushy and makes you uncomfortable, trust your gut instinct, hang up and reach out for assistance from your family or bank.”

There is no new Medicare card and no need to share account information for direct deposit. You will not lose any benefits despite what the callers try to make you believe. If you have given your account information to someone you initially believed to be with Medicare, contact your bank and they will help you change or monitor your account.

Oklahoma community banks in partnership with the Oklahoma Bankers Association have provided the following tips to help avoid this scam and others:

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- Remember you should never give out your account information to anyone over the phone or Internet;
- Screen your calls if you have caller ID or an answering system. Blocked or private calls can be a red flag as well as number unknown to you. If you let the call go to voicemail and the call is important, they will leave a message you can return;
- Do not engage with the caller as they will be persistent and threatening. If you find you have answered one of these calls, hang up the phone immediately;
- More tips are available online from LIFE Senior Services at <http://www.seniorline.org>.

The OBA conducts more than 70 educational programs and seminars each year, which reach more than 5,000 bankers across the state. The Association represents approximately 230 banks across the state and serves as the primary advocate for the banking industry. It's also heavily involved in fraud training and prevention as well as legal and compliance services and communications for its member banks.

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