

Watch for New Medicare Cards

By the GWAAR Legal Services Team (for reprint)

Medicare has provided health insurance coverage to older adults for over 50 years. Medicare A & B have always utilized people's Social Security numbers as their identification numbers. However, with increasing instances of identity theft across the country, the Social Security Number Removal Initiative was signed into law in 2015 to change the means of identification of Medicare beneficiaries. The Center for Medicare & Medicaid services (CMS) has been working on implementation of this change over the past few years to ensure a smooth transition, reduce the instances of scams related to the transition, and to work with both insurance providers and medical providers who will need to update their methods for submitting claims and billing Medicare on behalf of patients. The identification number conversion will affect over 55 million Medicare beneficiaries nationwide.

New Medicare cards will be mailed out to Medicare beneficiaries in two groups. Some people will receive their new Medicare cards towards the end of 2018 and others will receive their new Medicare cards in early 2019. The CMS expects all cards to be replaced by April 2019.

Medicare beneficiaries do not need to do anything to receive their new card—it will come automatically in the mail. As a reminder, Medicare will *never* call beneficiaries to ask for their Medicare numbers, or ask them to pay a fee associated with the replacement card. Anyone who receives a phone call from someone purporting to be calling from Medicare should hang up and report the contact to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) here:

<https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/>

For more information on the transition to new Medicare cards, visit:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicare/ssnri/index.html>

https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/new-medicare-cards-are-way?utm_source=govdelivery