



# Kansas Insurance Department

**Sandy Praeger**

COMMISSIONER OF INSURANCE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CONSUMER ALERT!**

### **Medicare Beneficiaries Should Be Alert To New Scam**

TOPEKA, KS – Insurance Commissioner Sandy Praeger wants Kansas seniors to know that the “\$299 Ring” scam, that she reported on in March, recently has escalated into a higher priced scam involving, in some cases, a new Medicare card, instead of a prescription drug plan.

Callers are asking for bank information or telling beneficiaries they can provide a new Medicare card for a fee of \$350 or more. Callers ask for bank account numbers that the callers then use to electronically withdraw money from the beneficiary’s account.

“Con artists have once again found a way to take advantage of the confusion surrounding the Medicare Part D prescription drug program,” said Praeger. “The senior population is the most vulnerable when it comes to these scams.”

According to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) callers may use fictitious names such as Pharma Corp., National Medical Office, Medicare National Office and National Medicare.

It is against Medicare’s rules to call a person with Medicare and ask for bank account or other personal information or cash payment, over the telephone. No beneficiary should ever provide that kind of information to someone who calls them.

Praeger recommends that if someone calls asking for this information or the call seems suspicious for any reason, beneficiaries should hang up the phone immediately and contact the Kansas Insurance Department at 1-800-432-2484, Medicare at 1-877-772-3379 or their local law enforcement or consumer protection agency.

#### Tips for Avoiding Medicare Scams

- No one can come into your house uninvited.
- No one can ask you for personal information during their marketing activities.
- Always keep all personal information, such as your Medicare number, safe, just as you would a credit card or a bank account number.
- Legitimate Medicare drug plans will not ask for payment over the telephone or the Internet. They must send a bill to the beneficiary for the monthly premium.

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