

**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***

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## **Scam tries to fool seniors over health-care rebate**

*Fraudulent callers claim new forms, numbers, permissions required  
to get \$250 Medicare rebate*

INDIANAPOLIS (July 26, 2010) – No matter what anyone on the phone might say, seniors on Medicare don't have to do anything to receive their \$250 rebate check for hitting the "doughnut hole," the gap in prescription drug coverage.

The Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging (IAAAA) warns Indiana seniors not to fall victim to scams taking place in Michigan and other states.

"Scammers are calling or visiting seniors to say they need personal information, such as a Social Security or Medicare number, and/or a signature to process the rebate checks. They don't," says Tamra Simpson, program director for SMP (also known as Senior Medicare Patrol). "Seniors should never, ever, give their Social Security or their Medicare number to anyone over the phone, and no forms are needed for these rebates."

The checks are being mailed automatically by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as soon as seniors become eligible. No action on the consumer's part is required.

President Obama announced the rebates, the first step in eliminating the coverage gap under the Affordable Health Care Act, in late May; checks began going out in June and will be mailed every 30 days as seniors reach the gap. To be eligible, a senior must already have Medicare prescription drug coverage and must not be on the Medicare Extra Help program.

For more information about how the Affordable Health Care Act will affect seniors, they should visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

The rebate checks will come in an envelope bearing the HHS logo. The return address may be of a contractor hired to conduct the mailings. HHS estimates 4 million Americans will receive the tax-free rebates.

Other scams to watch out for:

**Lie:** Callers telling seniors they need new Medicare cards because of the new Affordable Health Care Act.

**Fact:** Seniors need do nothing to receive any benefits of the Affordable Health Care Act.

**Lie:** Insurance agents claiming that the new health care law requires seniors to change their health care benefits plans, including Part D plans.

**Fact:** The Affordable Care Act gives seniors more control over their health care choices. No senior is required to make any changes to their Medicare plans. For legitimate information about how the new health care law affects seniors, they should visit [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov).

**Lie:** An insurance salesman mailed a “release form” to his policyholders that authorized him to make medical decisions for them.

**Fact:** Never sign a form until you’re sure you completely understand its contents; take nothing for granted. Contact a trusted source or your local SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) office; in Indiana, call 1-800-452-4800 (TDD 1-866-846-0139).

**Lie:** Callers claiming to represent Medicare and asking for seniors’ Medicare numbers.

**Fact:** Medicare will never call and ask for anyone’s Medicare number. If you receive such a call, take the person’s name, write down the number he or she is calling from (use your caller ID, if possible), and report the call to 1-800-MEDICARE.

The IAAAA urges patients not to release any Medicare or personal information and to be aware of this and similar scams. If you have received a call similar to this or suspect Medicare fraud of any kind, please contact the IAAAA at 800-986-3505.

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The Indiana Association of Area Agencies on Aging, founded in 1978, advocates for quality programs and services for older adults and all persons with disabilities. The IAAAA works with all the state’s 16 Area Agencies on Aging. The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) were created by state statute in 1973 to deliver services under the Older Americans Act. AAAs are not-for-profit entities providing services to older adults and people with disabilities of any age and their caregivers.

The SMP programs, formerly known as the Senior Medicare Patrol programs, recruit and teach senior volunteers and professionals such as doctors, nurses, accountants, investigators, law enforcement personnel, attorneys, teachers and others to help Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries become better health care consumers. For more information or if you suspect someone is trying to coerce or steal your information, contact your local Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-986-3505.