



June 8, 2010

*******CONSUMER ALERT*********CONSUMER ALERT*******

ATTORNEY GENERAL LISA MADIGAN WARNS SENIORS TO WATCH OUT FOR MEDICARE FRAUD

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan is warning seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries to be on the lookout for scams and other fraudulent efforts expected to be prevalent this summer. Today's alert by Madigan comes as the first tax-free \$250 doughnut hole rebate checks are mailed out to Medicare beneficiaries who have fallen into the coverage gap.

Madigan's warning today is in response to a request from U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius and Attorney General of the United States Eric Holder urging them to work with HHS and federal, state, and local law enforcement officials on Medicare fraud education.

"I am pleased to join with Secretary Sebelius and Attorney General Holder in this effort to ensure seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries don't fall prey to scams," said Madigan.

"Older Illinoisans are often the targets of scams," said Madigan. "With the rollout of the new health care reform law, scam artists will be devising new ways to take advantage of seniors. It is critical that Illinois seniors have the information and resources they need to recognize fraud and avoid it."

Federal officials are already hearing reports of scam artists approaching seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries and claiming that they need to provide their personal information in order to receive the \$250 doughnut hole rebate check. Attorney General Madigan warns that the \$250 checks will be mailed automatically to eligible Medicare recipients and that consumers do not need to provide any personal information such as Medicare, Social Security, or bank account numbers to anyone who calls them about a rebate. Consumers should call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to report anyone who attempts to solicit personal information for this purpose. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Madigan also reports that consumers have received calls from scam artists who claim that the new health care reform law requires that Medicare recipients obtain a new Medicare card. These scam artists request the Medicare recipient's personal information, such as checking account number and Social Security number. If this happens, Madigan advises consumers to hang up the phone and call one of the numbers listed above to report the call.

Any Illinoisans who have concerns about potential Medicare fraud scams should reach out immediately to their local law enforcement office or immediately call Attorney General Madigan's Seniors Fraud Hotline at 800-243-5377 or the Consumer Fraud Hotline at:

800-386-5438 (Chicago)
800-243-0618 (Springfield)
800- 243-0607 (Carbondale)

Madigan's office routinely conducts informational programs on Medicare fraud scams as part of a consumer education program that she launched earlier this year to ensure that seniors have the knowledge necessary to protect themselves from con artists and deceptive practices. The Attorney General's office has taken this training program, known as the Silver Beat program, to seniors across the state. In addition, the office has distributed flyers and consumer alerts on the Medicare scam to senior centers across the state, to AARP and other senior service organizations.

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