

Medicare Part D Scams

Arkansas Attorney General
Press Release

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March 17, 2006

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansans already dealing with the confusions and missteps of Medicare Part D may now be facing another inevitable part of the program’s implementation: scams. Attorney General Mike Beebe warned Arkansans today that one such scam, which has surfaced in at least six states, may now be targeting Arkansans.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has dubbed the scam the “\$299 Ring.” Seniors and disabled persons have received phone calls from individuals claiming to be able to assist with enrollment in a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. The caller tries to convince the Medicare recipient to provide their bank-account numbers or other personal information. In other states, \$299 is the typical amount of money taken from the victims who do give information.

Beebe’s office is investigating a report from an Arkansan who received a similar call earlier this week. Fortunately, the consumer became suspicious and did not give out any personal information, and investigators are now working to find the source of the call.

“This type of scam can add insult to injury for Arkansans already dealing with problems related to Medicare Part D,” Beebe said. “It targets those who need these benefits and can least afford to lose money to a scam artist. Sadly, however, with a national program of this size and scope, such schemes were bound to surface.”

CMS emphasizes that representatives from any of the approved Part D plans should not ask for personal information over the phone. Beebe reminds Arkansans that they should never have to give any personal information to someone who calls uninvited, no matter who the caller claims to be. In addition, legitimate plans will not charge up-front fees before enrolling Medicare recipients.

Medicare officials have received complaints about this scam from Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Any Arkansans who feel they have been targeted can report the caller to Medicare at 1-877-772-3379 or contact the Attorney General’s Office.

For free help with Medicare Plan D enrollment, consumers can contact the Arkansas Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) at (501) 371-2782 or (800) 224-6330.

For information on other consumer matters, contact the Public Protection Division of the Attorney General's Office at Suite 200, 323 Center Street, Little Rock, AR 72201. The office can be reached by calling 682-2341 (Little Rock) or 1-800-482-8982. Spanish-speaking consumers can also call (501) 683-3130. TDD service is available for the hearing impaired at 682-6073. The address on the World Wide Web is www.arkansasag.gov.