

Monthly Columns

by Attorney General Jack Conway



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Kentucky's senior citizens need to be aware of a possible scam involving the \$250 Medicare rebate checks that the federal government began mailing to Medicare beneficiaries in mid-June. The rebates are part of the new Affordable Care Act and are designed to close the Medicare coverage gap known as the "doughnut" hole.

I know these checks will provide needed relief to seniors who are struggling to pay for the high cost of prescription drugs. Unfortunately, the checks could be used by scammers who prey on elderly citizens.

Please be aware that offers for assistance in getting your rebate check are a scam and merely an attempt to obtain personal and financial information or even steal your identity. Medicare will automatically mail the checks to those who qualify. You do not need to apply for the \$250 rebate check. Additionally, you will not need to provide a Social Security number or any other personal information, including your Medicare card number or bank account information, in order to receive your rebate check.

Protecting Kentucky's senior citizens from scams like this remains a top priority of mine. Through my Office of Consumer Protection and Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Control, we are working every day to protect our vulnerable citizens from fraud and abuse.

In this effort, we have worked closely with local, state and federal authorities to alert and educate consumers about scams and to combat Medicaid fraud. We have increased six-fold the amount of Medicaid fraud recovery. I am also pleased to report to Kentucky taxpayers that we have recovered or been awarded more than \$100 million for the state and federal Medicaid programs since I took office in January 2008.

I look forward to continuing to work with our federal government partners, including the United States Department of Justice and Department of Health and Human Services

(HHS), to combat fraud. I also applaud their new initiatives to educate seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries about how to protect themselves from scams. Additionally, I believe HHS's plan to double the size of its Senior Medicare Patrol program, which recruits retired professionals to serve as educators and resources in helping beneficiaries detect and report fraud, waste and abuse in the Medicare program, will be beneficial to elderly across the country.

For more information on how Kentucky's senior citizens can protect themselves against fraud and abuse or to find out the dates of our upcoming Senior Crime Colleges, please visit the Protecting Seniors page on my website at www.ag.ky.gov.

Working together, we can make Kentucky a safer place to live, work and raise a family.

Jack Conway
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