

# Medicare and You

## Is Fraud In The Cards For Seniors On Medicare?

(NAPSA)—Millions of Medicare beneficiaries can now enroll in the new Medicare discount drug card program. However, as mailboxes fill with drug card information, some Medicare beneficiaries, especially seniors, may find themselves at risk for drug card fraud by organizations claiming to be Medicare-approved.

“Older people have caught the attention of professional con-artists who fleece the elderly for a living,” says Tom Cassidy, a former senior investigator for the New York State Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the author of “Elder Care/What To Look For/What To Look Out For!”

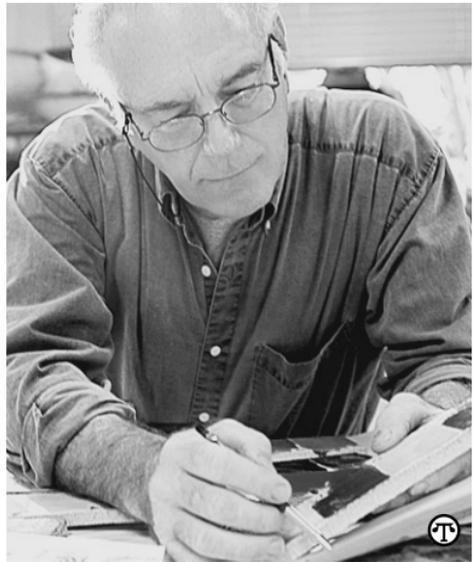
“However,” said Cassidy, “consumers armed with the right information about the new Medicare program can avoid being taken for a ride.”

According to a recent report from the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO), the number of organizations selling fraudulent health care benefits has doubled, over the last two years.

Cassidy says that older consumers, and those who care for them, can easily identify which cards are legitimate and which are fraudulent using a few simple tips:

- **Know your options:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) states that only 36 organizations and 43 Medicare Advantage plans, including major health insurers and pharmacy benefit managers like Medco Health Solutions, are Medicare-approved.

- **Look for the Logo:** All legitimate Medicare-approved cards carry a “Medicare Approved” logo in the lower right corner. Consumers should look for the logo



**Experts encourage seniors to do their homework on the new Medicare discount drug cards.**

and not accept any card without it.

- **“Endorsed” is not Approved:** Official cards in the Medicare program are only referred to as “Medicare-approved.” Be suspicious of cards that are Medicare-endorsed, Medicare-produced or Medicare-provided.

- **Hang up on Fraud and Keep the Door Closed:** Medicare-approved plans will never sell door-to-door or over the phone, and they will never use high-pressure tactics to sell you a card.

- **Isolation can lead to exploitation:** Elderly consumers who live alone are often the targets of fraud schemes. It is important for family members to keep in touch with elderly relatives and friends and help them avoid the risk of fraud.

For more information on the new Medicare discount drug card program, consumers can visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), or call (800) MEDICARE.