Consumer Alert: Telephone Scammers Are Spoofing Local Hospitals and Public Utilities to Steal Personal Information, Threatening to Terminate Medicare Benefits

June 23, 2021 - The Consumer Protection Division has received reports that scammers are "spoofing" local hospital and public utility phone numbers in an attempt to steal personal and medical information, such as Medicare, Medicaid, and/or Social Security numbers, over the phone. Some of the scammers are threatening to terminate Medicare benefits if the call recipient refuses to provide personal information over the phone.

Because these incoming calls appear to be legitimate on the recipient's Caller ID, these scams are a particularly dangerous type of deception. The scammers are hoping they can trick potential victims into answering the phone by spoofing legitimate phone numbers. **If you are not expecting a call, be very wary of any calls that appear on your caller ID to be coming from a medical facility or public utility.**

If you do receive an unexpected phone call that displays the name of a local hospital, medical facility, doctor's office, or public utility, the Attorney General recommends that you let the call go to voicemail. You can then call the hospital or utility directly – using a telephone number listed on an official website – to ask if they called you and for what reason. **Never give any personal information to a caller you do not know or on a call you did not initiate.** If an unsolicited caller asks for personal information, such as SSNs or Medicare/Medicaid numbers, hang up immediately.

Medicare does not request personal information about you by telephone or make threatening calls requesting your information. If you think that there is a problem with your Medicare benefits, call Medicare at 1-800-Medicare (1-800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

Report any suspected health-related scams to the Health Education and Advocacy Unit at 410-528-1840. Other suspected scams can be reported to the Mediation Unit's consumer hotline at 410-528-8662. Hotline en español: 410-230-1712.

If you have divulged personal or medical information to someone who called you, and now suspect they may have been trying to scam you, contact our Identity Theft Unit at 410-576-6491 or idtheft@oag.state.md.us to learn how to recover and protect your identity.