

Social Security numbers to be removed from benefit cards

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 made an important change for Medicare recipients. In Section 501, the removal of Social Security numbers on Medicare cards is mandated. While this isn't to say that it will happen instantly, it is a step in the right direction for people who are receiving Medicare.

As it stands now, Social Security numbers are included on every Medicare card. That makes senior citizens more prone to identity theft. Under the new system, Medicare beneficiaries will have a randomly generated beneficiary number on the Medicare cards instead of a Social Security number.

The Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 provides Medicare with eight years to get the new system going. It also has four years to get cards to new recipients and four more years to get existing beneficiaries new cards. The issue with those figures is that there is no clear direction about whether the two 4-year terms are to run consecutively or concurrently.

This is a battle that has been fought for a long time. In fact, in 2008, the Inspector General of Social Security sought out the immediate removal of the SSN from Medicare cards. That "immediate removal" has now taken another step forward in 2015.

For people who receive Social Security benefits, the availability of their SSN can lead to devastation. Even for people who aren't reliant on SSDI or SSI payments, the SSN getting into the wrong hands can lead to financial troubles. This is another reason why it is important for the SSN to be removed as an identifier on Medicare cards.

Source: ABC News, "[Why the Social Security Number Should Be Dead](#)," Adam Levin, April. 26, 2015