

# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FRAUD!

The MDA regularly receives calls from members regarding various types of fraud and identity theft. Situations include phone and email scams (known as phishing), false bills, claims of payment owed, fraudulent unemployment claims, and fraudulent tax returns. Follow these basic tips to help protect yourself against fraud:

- Do not use your Social Security number to file dental claims. All insurance companies now use your Type 1 NPI number to identify you.
- Do not include your Social Security number on prescriptions. Instead use your Type 1 NPI number and DEA license number.
- Never leave your NPI number or Social Security number on a voicemail.
- If your staff has access to your Social Security number and credit card, have a clear written policy and be very specific about the circumstances for which they can be used. If in doubt, require that you approve the use first.
- If you receive a phone call stating you owe money and there will be a serious consequence if you don't pay immediately over the phone, or that you must pay via wire transfer, do NOT give any information. Request a call-back number and a written copy of the bill owed. Then use Google to look up the legitimate number for the company and contact it through the main phone number to verify the charge. If you owe a balance, you should have received multiple notices in writing. A legitimate business should not have a problem sending you verifying documentation of a bill.
- If you receive an unexpected bill via fax, carefully check the bill before paying. Look for typos, misspelled places, phone and fax numbers with different area codes, and other mistakes. Look up the company online to verify all contact information. Use Google to search for it instead of using the link provided. Be aware that many scams may create false websites that look legitimate at first glance. Check with your full staff to verify whether someone actually ordered or received the item billed.
- Do not request or keep on file Social Security numbers of your patients. Patients are assigned unique ID numbers by their insurance company, and that number is used to file the claims.
- The MDA does not request or keep on file any Social Security numbers.

Remember, once your Social Security number has been compromised there is always risk that it could be used for future fraudulent activity. Scammers rely on fear tactics and catching people busy and off-guard to gain information before they become suspicious. Share your Social Security number only when absolutely required, monitor your credit reports carefully, and notify the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) if you believe your number has been compromised. For more information visit [www.consumer.ftc.gov](http://www.consumer.ftc.gov).



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