Beware of scams that are going around especially those that have started since COVID-19. One of the newer scams comes in the mail and states that payments will be suspended or discontinued unless you call the phone number provided. Please know that the Social Security Administration (SSA) will not be suspending or discontinuing your benefits because of their offices being closed to the public. SSA will not ask for payments in forms of gift cards, wire transfers, internet currency or by mailing in cash.

Another scam to beware of is scammers offering COVID-19 testing to Medicare beneficiaries in exchange for personal information. The scammers are using telemarking calls, social media and door-to-door visits to offer the testing. Scammers are hoping to collect insurance information to be able to fraudulently bill Federal health care programs or even commit medical identity fraud.

Here are some helpful tips on how to avoid fraud- taking from [**https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/COVID-19-Fraud.aspx**](https://www.smpresource.org/Content/Medicare-Fraud/Fraud-Schemes/COVID-19-Fraud.aspx)

* Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone other than your doctor, health care provider, or other trusted representative.
* Protect your Medicare number and treat your Medicare card like a credit card.
* Never provide your Medicare number to anyone who contacts you through unsolicited calls, texts, or emails.
* Be cautious of anyone who comes to your door offering free coronavirus testing, treatment, or supplies.
* Don’t click on links from sources you don’t know, which could put your computer or device at risk. Make sure the anti-malware and anti-virus software on your computer are up to date.
* Be cautious when purchasing medical supplies from unverified sources, including online advertisements and email/phone solicitations.
* Ignore online offers for vaccinations. If you see ads touting prevention products or cures for COVID-19, they are most likely a scam.
* Do your homework before making a donation to a charity or crowdfunding site due to a public health emergency. Be particularly wary of any charities requesting donations by cash, by gift card, or wire transfer.
* Be alert to “investment opportunities.” The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is warning people about online promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly traded companies can prevent, detect, or cure COVID-19 and that the stock of these companies will dramatically increase in value as a result.

Resources used:

<https://oig.hhs.gov/coronavirus/fraud-alert-covid19.asp?utm_source=web&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=covid19-fraud-alert>

<https://oig.ssa.gov/newsroom/news-releases/march20-advisory>