# **Don’t be Misled by False Medicare or Social Security Ads**

**By Kirk Larson**

**Social Security Washington Public Affairs Specialist**



Online and otherwise, there’s a lot of information out there, and sometimes it’s difficult to tell what sources are credible. With millions of people relying on Social Security, scammers target audiences who are looking for program and benefit information.

The law that addresses misleading Social Security and Medicare advertising prohibits people or non-government businesses from using words or emblems that mislead others. Their advertising can’t lead people to believe that they represent, are somehow affiliated with, or endorsed or approved by Social Security or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (Medicare).

People are often misled by advertisers who use the terms “Social Security” or “Medicare”. Often, these companies offer Social Security services for a fee, even though the same services are available directly from Social Security free of charge. These services include getting:

* + - A corrected Social Security card showing a person’s married name;
    - A Social Security card to replace a lost card;
    - A *Social Security Statement*; and
    - A Social Security number for a child.

If you receive misleading information about Social Security, send the complete ad, including the envelope, to:

Office of the Inspector General Fraud Hotline  
Social Security Administration  
P.O. Box 17768  
Baltimore, MD 21235

You can learn more about how we combat fraudulent advertisers by reading our publication *What You Need to Know About Misleading Advertising* at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10005.pdf](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10005.pdf?utm_source=mip0918&utm_medium=online-media&utm_content=Dont-be-Misled-by-False-Medicare-or-Social-Security-Ads-001&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18).

You can also report Social Security fraud to the Office of the Inspector General at [oig.ssa.gov/report](https://oig.ssa.gov/report#utm_source=mip0918&utm_medium=online-media&utm_campaign=ocomm-mip-fy18&utm_content=Dont-be-Misled-by-False-Medicare-or-Social-Security-Ads-002).