

HPD warns citizens of scams

Written by Holyoke Enterprise
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Scammers posing as Medicaid or Medicare representatives have popped up in Holyoke with intentions of acquiring banking information.

The Holyoke Police Department recently received a call from a concerned citizen who had been contacted by telephone by a person claiming to represent Medicaid. The caller informed the intended victim that her social security checks would be canceled unless she supplied the caller with the routing number associated with her banking account.

The caller already had the woman's name, telephone number and house address. When the woman asked for a call-back number, the caller refused, further raising red flags. She refused to give out her personal information and quickly notified Medicaid, who informed her that she had been targeted in an attempted money scam.

Police Chief Doug Bergstrom indicated that the scammer was "fairly aggressive" in his pursuit of banking information. Bergstrom advises that any person who has dealt with Medicaid or Medicare in the past should be cautious of any contact with representatives that the patient did not initiate. Personal information should never be given over the phone or on the Internet.

"If you haven't requested information from Medicare or Medicaid and you are receiving phone calls, be leery about that," Bergstrom advised.

Bergstrom also warns residents that scams, particularly those targeting the elderly, tend to be more frequent during the summer.

Although no incidents have been reported this year, a popular scam that Holyoke has faced in the past involves a call from someone claiming to be a family member in need of money.

Callers will use a variety of lies such as they need bail money, they have lost their passport or they have been in a car crash and are in dire need of funds, typically asking money to be wired to them.

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Bergstrom advises anyone who receives a call of this nature to ask for the name of the caller. Often the caller will wait to hear the person say a specific name and then the caller will claim to be that person.

Anyone who believes they have been the victim of a scam should notify the authorities as soon as possible.

More information on common scams can be found at bbb.org/us/consumer-tips-scams.

Holyoke Enterprise March 28, 2013