Washington Insurance Commissioner Warns: Guard Your Insurance Card to Avoid Scams

Local News

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler warns people to keep their insurance information secure because it can be a source of identity theft."You know to protect your credit cards and Social Security number, but not everyone thinks about what can happen if the wrong person gets hold of your health insurance information," Kreidler said. "You could get hit with a big bill or even end up with a misdiagnosis because your medical records are not your own."While the problem does not yet appear to be widespread in Washington, it is becoming more frequent around the country. As more people lose their jobs, some of those without healthcare are using other peoples' cards to access treatment; addicts also have been busted for using the information to get prescriptions for pills.

To avoid issues, consumers should treat their health insurance cards like they would other sensitive personal information, Kreidler advises. They also should review all information they receive from their insurance companies or health care providers to make sure they aren't being billed for services they did not receive. If they find an issue, they should call their insurer right away.Insurance fraud drives up costs for everyone. To learn more about how to avoid scams and help prevent fraud, visit the Insurance Commissioner's Web site at http://www.insurance.wa.gov/fraud and click on *Fraud* in the left-hand column.