People eager to sign up for Oregon Health Plan urged to beware of scams

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Oregonians who want to get their names on the Oregon Health Plan reservation list that opens Jan. 28 should say "no" to anyone who calls asking for a Social Security number. "The state will not call you inviting you to sign up, and you are not required to give your Social Security number to get on the list," said Jim Edge, state Medicaid director in the Oregon Department of Human Services. "If someone calls you and asks for a Social Security number, you should not provide it." Edge said a woman in Clackamas County told a county caseworker she was asked for a Social Security number by a caller identifying himself as a state worker. Edge said it isn't known where the call originated or whether the caller had fraudulent intent, but that people should be cautious any time someone asks for personal information over the phone. He said individuals will be required to provide only their full name, date of birth and mailing address to get on the reservation list to enroll in the health plan's Standard benefit package. Providing a Social Security number is optional when getting on the reservation list, although it will be required when completing an application to enroll, he said. For the first time since mid-2004, the state is preparing to accept new enrollees for the OHP-Standard benefit package. Persons wishing to enroll may get their names on the reservation list beginning Jan. 28 using any of these methods: â€¢ Go to www.oregon.gov/DHS/open on the Internet and select "Request Form" from the menu option, then complete and submit the form. â€¢ Pick up a form at a DHS office, complete it and return it to any local DHS office, or fax it to 503-373-7866 or 503-378-6295. â€¢ Call 1-800-699-9075 toll-free Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., Pacific time. Salem-area residents may call 503-378-2666. The call will take 10-20 minutes to complete. â€¢ E-mail the required information to standard.reservation@state.or.us. â€¢ Mail the required information to Oregon Health Plan, P.O. Box 14520, Salem, OR 97309-5044. No reservations will be accepted before Jan. 28, and none will be taken after Feb. 29. People whose names are randomly drawn from the reservation list will be mailed applications, which must be completed and returned within 30 days. Up to 10,000 people will be enrolled during the next several months. The number of participants in the Standard plan, budgeted for a biennial average of 24,000 people, has fallen sufficiently to permit more people to enroll. The OHP-Standard benefit package covers physician services, prescription drugs, chemical dependency and mental health services, emergency medical services, and limited dental, hospital and vision benefits. Enrollees pay monthly premiums of $9 to $20, depending on income and number of people in the household, unless their income is less than 10 percent of the federal poverty level. The OHP-Plus benefit package, which is always open, enrolls people who qualify for reasons such as being aged, blind, disabled, children under age 19 or recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families payments.