



## Fraud, Waste and Abuse in Federal Healthcare Programs

Practices that participate in federal healthcare programs, such as Medicare, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, are required to establish a compliance program to prevent fraud, waste and abuse. While the practice will be responsible for many of the controls that serve to limit these occurrences, each employee of the practice must be aware of the practice's policies, and familiar with his/her responsibilities to prevent and detect fraud and abuse.

The following list of responsibilities may have been included in an Employee Code of Conduct form that your employer asked you to sign upon hire, and will serve as a reminder of your duties in regard to this particular compliance program.

- Each employee is responsible for reporting errors or violation of policies and procedures in his/her own conduct. In addition, any observation or suspicion of wrongful conduct, or violation by others must also be reported as soon as it possible.
- No acts of retaliation against an employee that, in good faith, reports possible wrongful conduct or violation of policies and procedures will be tolerated. However, it is important never to report someone in bad faith, meaning you know for certain that the employee really is not violating his/her employee obligations, but you make such a report out of spite, jealousy, or for some other improper purpose.
- The practice should have an established method of anonymous reporting, such as a drop box or mailing address where written reports may be sent. While anonymous reports are generally more difficult to investigate, having report forms freely available, and an anonymous method of delivery, helps to encourage reporting so that errors and other issues can be resolved.
- Ensure that you complete initial and annual fraud, waste and abuse training. It is an employer's responsibility to make training available to employees, and each employee is required to participate in the training and abide by the information provided.
- A practice is required to impose sanctions or disciplinary actions on any employee who intentionally or knowingly violates any federal or state law or regulation, or for intentionally not bringing to the attention of the practice any billing-related error that results in an overpayment to the practice.
- It is important to ask for clarification or assistance whenever a doubtful situation arises. Rather than risk violating fraud, waste and abuse statutes, it is better to seek advice if you have a question. ●