

Introduction

Most physicians strive to work ethically, render high-quality medical care to their patients, and submit proper claims for payment. Society places enormous trust in physicians, and rightly so. Trust is at the core of the physician-patient relationship. When our health is at its most vulnerable, we rely on physicians to use their expert medical training to put us on the road to a healthy recovery.

The Federal Government also places enormous trust in physicians. Medicare, Medicaid, and other Federal health care programs rely on physicians' medical judgment to treat beneficiaries with appropriate services. When reimbursing physicians and hospitals for services provided to program beneficiaries, the Federal Government relies on physicians to submit accurate and truthful claims information.



The presence of some dishonest health care providers who exploit the health care system for illegal personal gain has created the need for laws that combat fraud and abuse and ensure appropriate quality medical care. This brochure assists physicians in understanding how to comply with these Federal laws by identifying “red flags” that could lead to potential liability in law enforcement and administrative actions. The information is organized around three types of relationships that physicians frequently encounter in their careers:

- I. Relationships with payers,
- II. Relationships with fellow physicians and other providers, and
- III. Relationships with vendors.

The key issues addressed in this brochure are relevant to all physicians, regardless of specialty or practice setting.

