

# Reporting Fraud and Suspected Fraud

*Standard opening (lead-in music)*

**Narrator:** Welcome to the Reporting Fraud and Suspected Fraud Podcast. This podcast provides information for States, providers, and beneficiaries on the importance of reporting fraud and suspected fraud. Let's join Brian, the State Medicaid Program Integrity Director, and Rachel, his agency's Communications Director, as they discuss ways to increase awareness of this important topic along with tools they can use to translate awareness into action.

*(End music)*

*Scene – Brian's private office:*

**Rachel:** Hi, Brian. It's been a while. I remember you wanted to talk about a joint effort to improve how we get the message out about reporting fraud and suspected fraud. Does that sound familiar?

**Brian:** That's right. Let me tell you why this has become such a big priority for us. I was going over some of our stats for the last year or so, you know, audits, investigations, referrals, recoveries, cost avoidance, etc. As I was finishing my review, it became all too clear that we received very few reports of suspected or actual fraud from either providers or beneficiaries.

**Rachel:** Really? That surprises me. I've always assumed your office receives lots of tips and reports about all kinds of questionable and outright illegal activity.

**Brian:** Yeah, you'd think. But my quick and dirty internal review, as well as the broader research I did, tells a different tale. It set off an alarm in my head.

**Rachel:** I can understand that. Let's talk about your ideas and what my office can work with you to get this accomplished. However, have you cleared this with our State Medicaid Director? I don't want to start some major, labor-intensive project unless she is on board.

**Brian:** She is. I briefed her on the problem and my recommended solution before I firmed up this meeting with you. She agrees that something significant needs to be done, and it's something your office and mine should take on together. We have her full support.

**Rachel:** That's great! You've obviously done your homework. You've told me what you came up with in your internal review. So what did you find when you looked outside your own office?

**Brian:** Actually, the first thing I did was re-familiarize myself with our own Medicaid website, which, frankly, I haven't looked at for some time. I found it lacking in a major way. There is little in the way of program integrity on our site in general, and there are no specifics about how to report fraud and suspected fraud.

**Rachel:** Really? Again, I'm surprised.

**Brian:** I know. We should've been more vigilant. I did my own search of numerous other States' and Federal websites. This search wasn't exhaustive, but it was enough to make me realize that we're among the only States without a fraud reporting mechanism on its website. At least we're on the list of State-by-State Fraud and Abuse Contacts[1] listed on the CMS website, and our information was current. I was surprised that it was difficult to find any specific information related to program integrity on more than a few websites. A few States have State-generated anti-fraud information, but only a handful of States actually include information and links to the CMS-sponsored Medicaid Program Integrity Education (MPIE) website tools and resources that directly address suspected fraud.[2] There are a lot of tools out there. I was only vaguely aware of these resources myself.

**Rachel:** Well, I can see why the alarm went off.

**Brian:** Exactly. What came through loud and clear to me is our State is a lot closer to the bottom than it is to the top when it comes to providing useful information to providers and beneficiaries about reporting fraud, waste, or abuse. Clearly, there are resources available that would increase awareness and aid in reporting fraud and suspected fraud. I was hoping we could put our heads together and fix this problem.

**Rachel:** That sounds great to me. What are you proposing?

**Brian:** First, I think we need to set a simple goal. Let's get out of the cellar and establish our State as a leader in the area of reporting fraud and suspected fraud.

**Rachel:** OK.

**Brian:** Second, we need to start with the basics. Let's redesign our website so program integrity and reporting fraud and suspected fraud are featured front and center. It must be user-friendly, contain solid, helpful information, and make maximum use of the resources that are out there, particularly the approved products that CMS has on the MPIE website. Let's be sure we list the various types of fraud and abuse that are common in the program[3]—among both providers and beneficiaries—and be very specific on how this kind of behavior can be reported.[4] I also think it's important to make the reporting process as simple and transparent as possible.

**Rachel:** That's a tall order, but it certainly can be done. I'm sure we can put an internal team together and appoint a webmaster or a small team to stay on top of the site after it's built and operating.

You know, I don't think it ends there. Obviously, we need a multi-faceted approach. I'm sure many of the resources you're talking about rely heavily on provider education and training, webinars, and other similar things.

**Brian:** They do, and to reach the beneficiary population, we could do fact sheets with contact information and place them in providers' offices. We had a fraud hotline once, but it wasn't very effective. We could revisit that and have the team redesign it, and possibly borrow a page from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (HHS-OIG)[5] and States' hotlines that work well.

**Rachel:** You know, we could also consider some kind of limited, but targeted, radio and TV public service announcements. Where do you want to start?

**Brian:** Let's start by putting together our team, with the first and primary goal of redesigning the website. Give it some thought, and we can get back together, compare notes, and make our team member selections. Let's compile a list of "basics" that must be included in the website and discuss them when we meet. Some of the other approaches can be re-visited along the way. In the meantime, I need to reach out to our program and law enforcement partners for their input. Why don't you touch base with the information technology department? Let's set up a regular reporting mechanism for the Medicaid Director—nothing elaborate or burdensome. We could send a running email, every other week.

**Rachel:** Sounds like a reasonable plan. This could be fun.

**Brian:** I agree. Let's get it done!

*(Standard closing with music)*

**Canned:** More questions? For additional information about reporting fraud and suspected fraud, contact your State Medicaid agency or the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services at [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov). **Follow us on Twitter**  [#MedicaidIntegrity](https://twitter.com/MedicaidIntegrity)

*(End music)*

## References

- 1 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, How to Report Fraud and Suspected Fraud (p. 1). Retrieved December 21, 2015, from <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Fraud-Prevention/FraudAbuseforConsumers/Downloads/smafraudcontacts-oct2014.pdf>
- 2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2015, September). Health Care Fraud and Program Integrity: An Overview for Providers (p. 12). Retrieved December 21, 2015, from <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Fraud-Prevention/Medicaid-Integrity-Education/Downloads/fwa-overview-booklet.pdf>
- 3 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2015, September) Common Types of Health Care Fraud. Retrieved December 21, 2015, from <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Fraud-Prevention/Medicaid-Integrity-Education/downloads/fwa-factsheet.pdf>
- 4 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. Program Integrity: Fraud, Waste and Abuse Toolkit. Retrieved December 21, 2015, from <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare-Medicaid-Coordination/Fraud-Prevention/Medicaid-Integrity-Education/fwa.html>
- 5 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General. Report Fraud. Retrieved December 21, 2015, from <http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/report-fraud/index.asp>

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