



Related MLN Matters Article #: SE0421

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OIG Alert About Charging Extra for Covered Services

Key Words

SE0421, Office, Inspector, General, OIG, Alert, Added, Payment, Covered, Fees, Additional, Civil, Money, Penalties, CMP

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, suppliers, and providers

Key Points

- On March 31, 2004, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued an alert that focused on physicians charging extra for services covered by Medicare.
- OIG reminded Medicare participating physicians of the potential liabilities posed by billing Medicare patients for services that are already covered by Medicare.
- When participating providers request added payment for covered services from Medicare patients, they are liable for substantial penalties and exclusion from Medicare and other federal health care.
- A participating provider is a provider of Medicare covered items and services who agrees to accept the Medicare-approved charge for all covered services to Medicare patients.
- Providers can charge Medicare beneficiaries extra for items and services that **are not** covered by Medicare and may charge for any Medicare deductibles and coinsurance without violating the terms of their agreements.
- The OIG Alert, dated March 31, 2004, and titled "OIG Alerts Physicians About Added Charges for Covered Services," can be found at <http://oig.hhs.gov/fraud/docs/alertsandbulletins/2004/FA033104AssignViolationI.pdf>.

Important Links

The related MLN Matters article can be found at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE0421.pdf> on the CMS website.