

Government Teams with Insurance Companies to Combat Healthcare Fraud

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The federal government continues to make [healthcare fraud](#) a top priority. A new program with insurance companies is just the latest addition to the healthcare fraud crackdown, which includes a Medicare Fraud Strike Force and Medicare and Medicaid Recovery Audit Contractor programs.

The Obama Administration's newest initiative creates a partnership with several major health insurers to detect and deter fraudulent medical billing. The primary goal is to share information on specific schemes, billing codes, and geographical fraud hotspots. The collaborators also hope to detect payments billed to different insurers for care delivered to the same patient on the same day in two different cities. The ultimate hope is to use technology and analytics on industry-wide healthcare data to predict and detect health care fraud schemes.

Given the increased scrutiny and enforcement, healthcare providers should take steps to bolster internal compliance procedures. This ensures providers will be prepared in the event of a Medicare/Medicaid audit or other government investigation.

A number of fraud prevention tactics are already required by Medicare and Medicaid and include internal reviews, employee training, and centralized compliance. Employee training is particularly important because it creates a culture of compliance throughout the organization. All employees should understand what activities may be considered fraudulent and how to report them.

Given the current emphasis on healthcare fraud, it's imperative that healthcare companies respond quickly and appropriately to employee complaints of potential misconduct, noncompliance, or fraudulent activity. Employees who feel that their concerns are being addressed are less likely to blow the whistle to the federal government.

Compliance officers and healthcare organizations also need to stay informed. The federal government continues to roll out new healthcare fraud initiatives. Policies and procedures need to be adapted to regulatory and legal updates.

About Ashley D. Adams, PLC

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