

NEBRASKA  
HEALTH  
NETWORK



**METHODIST**



**Nebraska<sup>SM</sup>  
Medicine**

# Medicare Accountable Care Organizations

An overview of shared savings program  
compliance requirements

# Introduction

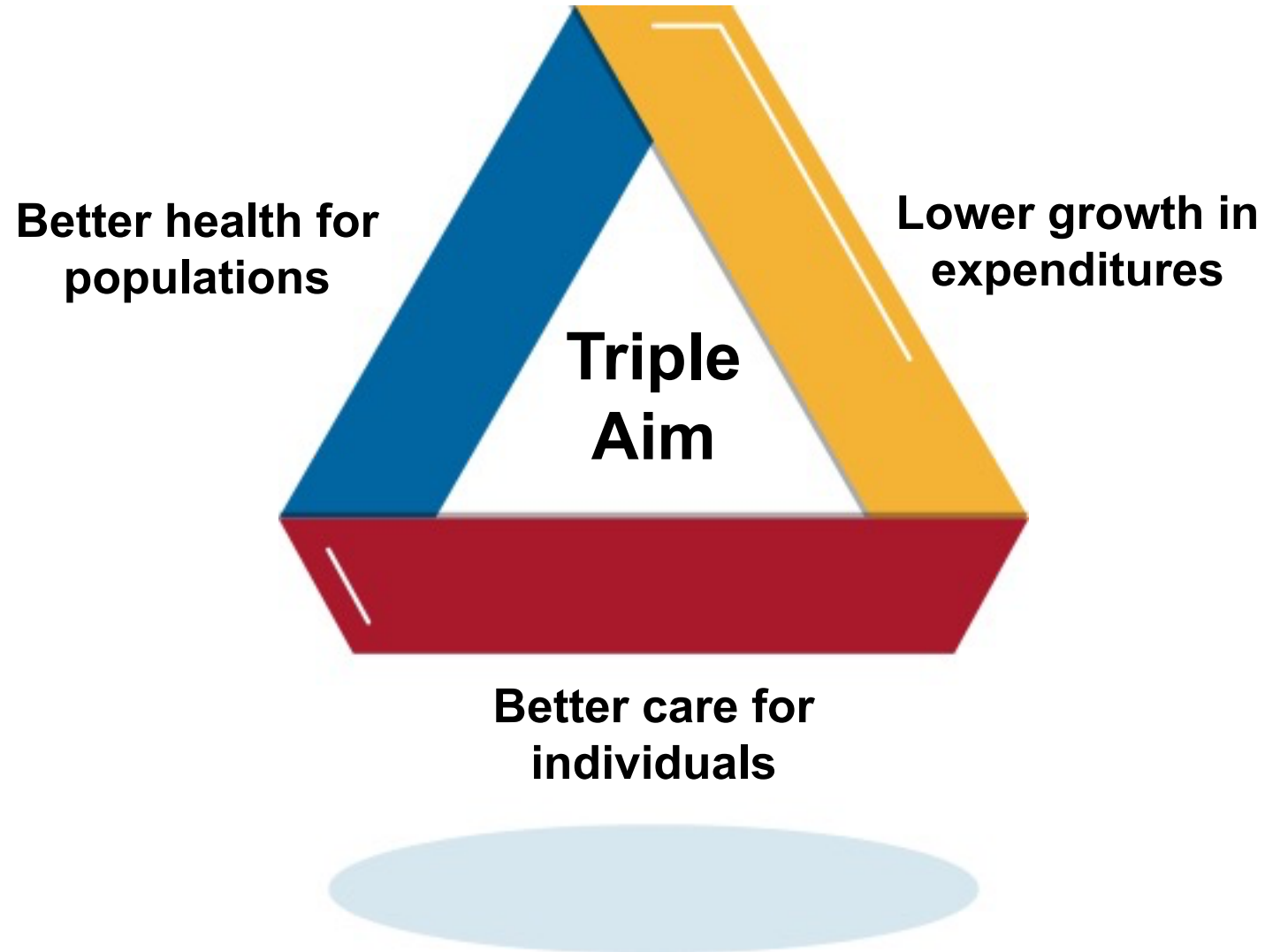
Methodist & Nebraska Medicine formed the Nebraska Health Network as an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) that participates in the Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) and other value-based agreements.

For MSSP, each ACO signs an agreement with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, which requires that the ACO and all individuals and entities providing services to the ACO, meet the requirements of the program.

Although this training may seem similar to a compliance program you complete through your organization, this program is separate and unique to the ACO and ACO activities (e.g. care coordination, quality reporting and costing saving initiatives).

# History in the Making

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) established the Medicare Shared Savings Program (Shared Savings Program) as part of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to improve the quality of health care delivered to Medicare Fee-For-Services beneficiaries (Beneficiaries) and reduce unnecessary costs.





## What an ACO is (and is not)

ACOs are groups of physicians, hospitals and other health-care providers who come together **voluntarily** to give coordinated high-quality care to their Medicare patients.

An ACO is **not** a Medicare Advantage Plan or an HMO



The Shared Savings Program financially rewards ACOs that lower growth in health-care costs while meeting performance standards on quality of care.

# How an ACO Impacts the Beneficiary

- 1** Beneficiaries are not members of the ACO and do not enroll in the ACO.

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- 2** They may continue to see any provider who accepts Medicare regardless of participation in an ACO; there is no limit or restriction on provider choice.

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- 3** Their benefits are unchanged – they retain the same Medicare coverage, including Medicare Supplement plans.

# How an ACO Impacts the Beneficiary

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Beneficiaries still have access to Medicare customer service, and Medicare continues to remit claims payments on behalf of Beneficiaries.

5

Beneficiaries cannot opt-out of the ACO. They can elect to prohibit CMS from sharing their claims data with the ACO, but this only prohibits data sharing.

- The Beneficiary will still be assigned to the ACO and the ACO is still responsible for the overall cost and quality of the Beneficiary's care.
- The Beneficiary can opt-out of and, conversely, opt back into data sharing at any time.

# Improved Care for Beneficiaries

**Nebraska Health Network Beneficiaries** should experience an improvement in care coordination as a result of their physician's participation in the ACO.



They will be encouraged to visit their primary care doctor and discuss care plans.



Their health-care team will communicate with each other.



They will avoid duplicative medical tests and forms because results can be shared among the healthcare team.





**NEBRASKA HEALTH NETWORK**

**Nebraska Health**

**Methodist is part of**

**Nebraska Medicine**

**Nebraska Health Network**

**Nebraska Medicine is participating in a Medicare Shared Savings Program Accountable Care Organization**

**How will an ACO help my doctor coordinate my care?**

**What is an Accountable Care Organization (ACO)?**

Your physician or provider is participating in Nebraska Health Network, a Medicare Shared Savings Program ACO. An ACO is a group of doctors, hospitals and/or other health-care providers that work together to improve the quality and experience of care you receive. ACOs receive a portion of any savings that result from reducing costs and meeting quality requirements.

An ACO isn't a Medicare Advantage plan, which is an "all in one" alternative to Original Medicare offered by private companies approved by Medicare. An ACO isn't an HMO plan, or an insurance plan of any kind.

ACOs do not limit your choice of healthcare providers. Your Medicare benefits are not changing.

**How will an ACO help my doctor coordinate my care?**

Coordinated care can avoid wasted time and costs for repeated tests and unnecessary appointments. It may make it easier to spot potential problems before they become more serious — like drug interactions that can happen if one doctor isn't aware of what another has prescribed.

NHN may use electronic health records, case managers and electronic prescriptions to help you stay healthy. NHN has special programs to encourage you to have a primary care visit or use your clinic's care management team. Participation in these programs are optional.

To help us coordinate your health care better, Medicare shares information about your care with your provider. If you don't want Medicare to share your healthcare information, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

**Choosing Your Physician (voluntary alignment)**

As a Medicare beneficiary, you can choose or change your primary physician or provider or "main doctor" at any time. Your primary physician or provider is the health-care provider that you believe is responsible for coordinating your overall care. If you choose a primary physician or provider, they may have more tools or services to help with your care.

You can change your primary physician or provider at any time, and select another one as your primary care provider. Your selection of a physician or provider will remain the same unless you decided to change your designation.

For assistance selecting, viewing and/or changing your primary physician or provider, visit MyMedicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE.

**What Do I Need To Do?**

We value your privacy. The NHN has put important safeguards in place to make sure all of your healthcare information is safe. We respect your choice on how your healthcare information is used for care coordination and quality improvement. If you want Medicare to share your healthcare information with the NHN or other ACOs in which your healthcare providers participate, there's nothing more you need to do.

If you don't want Medicare to share your healthcare information, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). Tell the representative that your health-care provider is part of an ACO and you don't want Medicare to share your healthcare information.TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

If you change your mind and want to let Medicare share your health information again, call 1-800-MEDICARE to let Medicare know. We aren't allowed to tell Medicare for you.

Even if you decline to share your healthcare information, Medicare will still use your information for some purposes, like assessing the financial and quality of care performance of the health-care providers participating in ACOs. Also, Medicare may share some of your healthcare information with ACOs when measuring the quality of care given by health-care providers participating in these ACOs.

**Questions**

If you have questions or concerns, please contact any member of your care team. Request a copy of our Beneficiary Information Notice that offers more information about ACOs and care coordination. Call 1-800-MEDICARE and tell the representative you're calling to learn more about ACOs, or visit [Medicare.gov/aco](http://Medicare.gov/aco).

**Contact us!**

402.339.6444 | [info@nebraskahhealthnetwork.com](mailto:info@nebraskahhealthnetwork.com)

1140 W. Dodge Road, Suite 400, Omaha, NE 68114

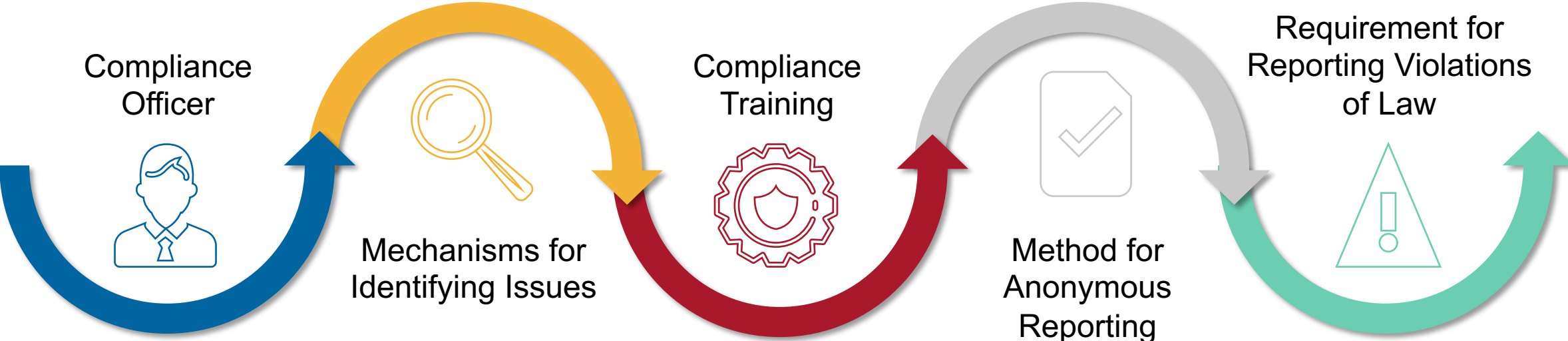
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# The Role of ACO Participants

- Participate and complete ACO training (e.g. Annual Compliance Training)
- Educate Beneficiaries about the ACO
- Coordinate care with other providers as appropriate
- Conduct complete and accurate quality reporting
- Participate in the leadership and governance of Nebraska Health Network, as appropriate

# Compliance Program Requirements

ACOs are required to have a Compliance Program. Under the Shared Savings Program, the Compliance Program must contain the following 5 elements:



At any time, CMS may audit our ACO to verify compliance with these requirements.

# Compliance Officer

Each ACO has a Compliance Officer who is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the ACO's Compliance Program. You can contact the ACO Compliance Officer with any questions or concerns about the ACO.



## Contact Compliance Officer...

- ✓ If you have **questions** about ACO policies and procedures
- ✓ When you are starting to implement **new initiatives** and have **ideas** related to the ACO
- ✓ You have **concerns** over actions of an entity or individual providing services related to ACO activities

*The NHN's compliance officer is a third-party attorney at Koley Jessen*

# Mechanisms for Identifying Issues

## Prevention

The ACO has adopted Policies & Procedures (P&Ps) to help ensure the regulatory requirements are met. The P&Ps are the basic plan to prevent compliance issues from occurring.

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## Detection

The Compliance Officer oversees the ongoing and comprehensive Monitoring & Oversight program to ensure the ACO is meeting the standards set forth in the P&Ps, as well as additional program requirements.

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## Correction

Once issues are identified, the ACO Compliance Officer works with the appropriate business areas to correct the issue. Correction may be done through the implementation of an Internal Corrected Action Plan (iCAP) and/or disciplinary action.

# Effective Training Programs

The ACO is required to implement an effective compliance training program for the ACO, ACO Participants and ACO Provider/Suppliers. Individuals needing to complete ACO-related compliance training may include, but are not limited to:

- Members of the ACO's Board of Directors and Sub-Committees
- ACO Participants and Providers/Suppliers and their staff
- ACO Care Coordinators

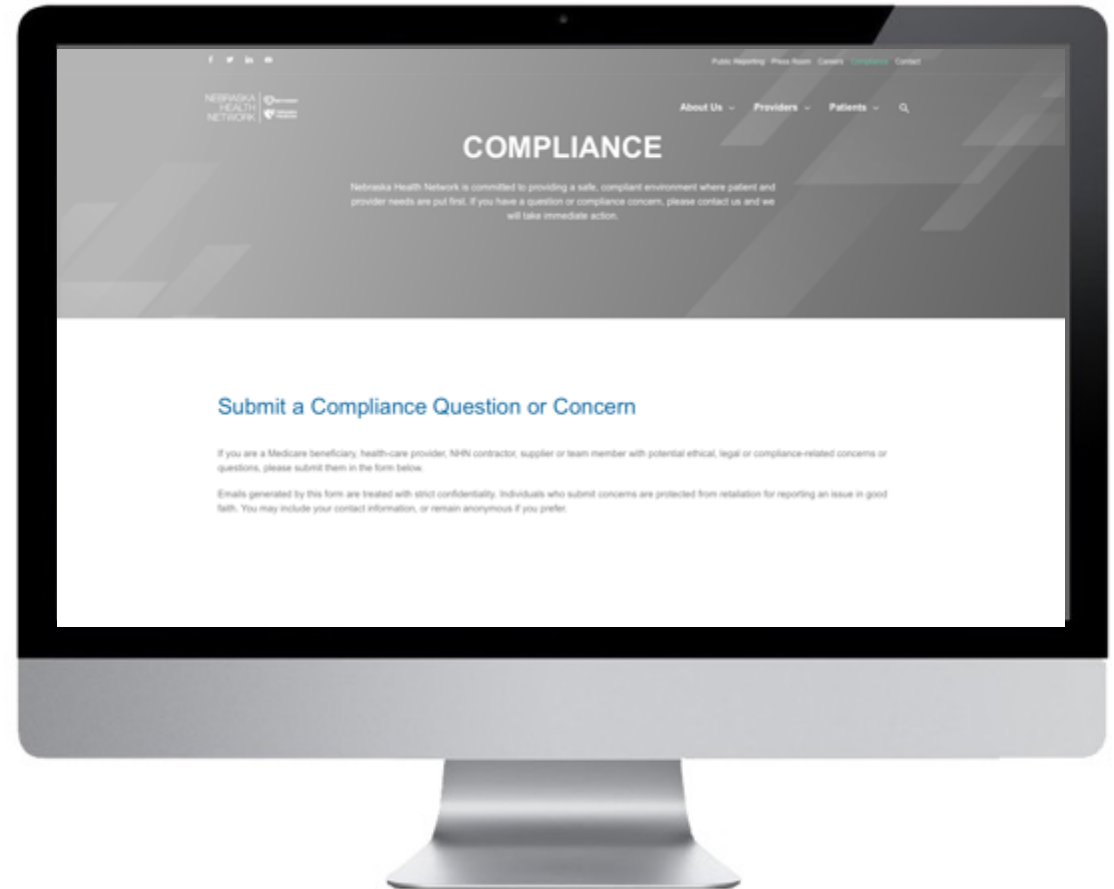


# Anonymous Reporting



The ACO has implemented an online system that allows an individual to **anonymously** report compliance concerns. You can use this link to report compliance concerns 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Anyone can report at any time! Each person working with the ACO has a duty to report any compliance concerns.







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## Non-Retaliation Policy

The ACO has a Non-Retaliation Policy for anyone making a report in good faith. As long as you are not intentionally making a false claim, nothing bad can happen to you for contacting compliance. There is zero tolerance for **any** retaliatory action.



If you ever believe that you are being retaliated against for any reason, you should contact the ACO Compliance Officer.

# Reporting Probable Violations of Law

ACOs must report probable violations of law to an appropriate law enforcement agency. The ACO Compliance Officer works with legal counsel and the ACO's Board of Directors to determine whether a report should be made. You are responsible for reporting any compliance concerns through one of the following methods:

## Compliance Officer:

- You can hand-deliver or mail information to: ACO Compliance Officer, 9140 W. Dodge Road, Suite 400, Omaha NE 68114; or
- Email the ACO Compliance Officer at: [msspcompliance@nebraskahealthnetwork.com](mailto:msspcompliance@nebraskahealthnetwork.com)

## Compliance Website

Submit your concern on the Compliance Website at [www.nebraskahealthnetwork.com/compliance/](http://www.nebraskahealthnetwork.com/compliance/)

## Your Supervisor

Express your concerns to your supervisor



# Privacy Concerns

- ACOs must meet privacy requirements above the standard HIPAA privacy rules.
- CMS no longer requires ACOs to submit addenda to make changes to their Data Use Agreements. All ACO contacts listed in ACO-MS will be considered DUA Custodians. These individuals are responsible for the observance of all conditions of data use and for establishment and maintenance of security arrangements as specified in the DUA to prevent unauthorized use or disclosure. DUA Custodians can access the requested data files and must oversee others within the organization who have access to the files.
- ACOs are now responsible for tracking their own subcontractors and noting the date the ACO started and/or stopped sharing data with the subcontractor and confirmation that any subcontractor they no longer work with has destroyed any data given to them by the ACO.
- HIPAA still applies and ACOs, including those providing services related to ACO activities, must still meet minimum necessary requirements.



To add an ACO vendor, contact Compliance.

# Marketing Compliance

ACOs are required to submit all “marketing materials” to CMS for approval prior to use. If any changes are made to an approved material, it must be resubmitted.

The ACO must wait for the “File & Use” period to lapse prior to utilizing materials filed with CMS, unless CMS grants approval prior to the end of the File & Use period.

- The “File & Use” period is five days for the Shared Savings Program.
- CMS can disapprove a material after the close of this period. If this occurs, the ACO must immediately stop using the material and correct identified issues.



Marketing Materials are defined in the regulations as any general audience material used to educate, solicit, notify or contact Beneficiaries or provider/suppliers regarding the program.

# Red Flag Compliance Issues for ACOs

## Cherry Picking

The ACO should avoid programs or activities that encourage healthy/low cost Beneficiaries to remain in or receive services from the ACO or that discourage high risk/cost Beneficiaries. This can happen intentionally or be an unintended result of a program or activity.

- Be sure to review for appearance of impropriety.
- Document intent of any new program clearly.
- Always work with Compliance to implement any new programs or initiatives. This will allow for a risk analysis and review of any potential concerns prior to implementation.

# Red Flag Compliance Issues for ACOs

## Managed Care/Networks

Avoid any language or activity suggesting that Beneficiaries must receive services from the ACO or any ACO Participant or Provider/Supplier. Beneficiaries retain freedom of choice, even if their provider is participating in an ACO.

## Medical Liability

Avoid language creating the appearance of a physician/patient relationship between the Beneficiary and the ACO. The ACO does not provide care and suggesting otherwise can create unnecessary risk and liability for the ACO.

# Fraud, Waste and Abuse Laws

ACO Compliance Training

# Fraud, Waste and Abuse Laws

There are five federal fraud, waste & abuse laws that all ACOs must understand and avoid:

- ⚠️ **Stark Law (Physician Self-Referral)**
- ⚠️ **False Claims Act**
- ⚠️ **Anti-kickback Statute**
- ⚠️ **Gainsharing Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP)**
- ⚠️ **Beneficiary Inducement CMP**



## Defining Fraud

Fraud is generally defined, in any jurisdiction, as a material misrepresentation of a fact that someone relies on to their detriment.

For our purposes, this generally means that a Beneficiary or CMS relies upon some action of an ACO or provider, and pays an inaccurate claim or receives an inappropriate service as a result.



## **Stark Law (Physician Self-Referral)**

This law prohibits a physician from making referrals for certain designated health services to an entity in which the physician (or an immediate family member) has an ownership/investment interest or with which he or she has a compensation arrangement, unless an exception applies.

Stark Law also prohibits health-care providers from presenting a claim or bill for these services – or to cause a claim or bill to be presented.

A physician generally makes a referral if he or she requests or orders an item or service covered by Medicare.





# Violations of Stark Law

## Example

A physician refers a beneficiary to complete blood work with a lab in which the physician has partial ownership interest.

Penalties for violating Stark Law may include fines up to \$15,000 per service, an assessment of up to three times the amount paid, as well as exclusion from participation in all Federal health-care programs.

Any physician or entity that knowingly participates in a scheme to circumvent the Stark Law is subject to a CMP of up to \$100,000 and may be excluded from participation in federal health-care programs.

# Federal False Claims Act

The Federal False Claims Act (FCA) protects the Federal Government from being overcharged or sold substandard goods or services.

FCA imposes civil liability on any person who **knowingly** submits or causes to be submitted a false or fraudulent claim to the Federal Government.

## Example

Up-coding Services: Up-coding occurs when a provider submits a claim representing a more serious/expensive procedure than was actually performed

# Anti-Kickback Statute

The Anti-Kickback Statute (AKS) makes it a criminal offense to knowingly and willfully offer, pay, solicit or receive any remuneration to induce or reward referrals of items or services that are reimbursable by a Federal health care program, such as Medicare.

Simply put, AKS prohibits **knowingly and willfully** exchanging remuneration for the referral of patients for items or services covered by a Federal health care program.

**Example:** A hospital pays a provider each time the provider refers a Medicare Beneficiary to the hospital.



# Gainsharing Civil Monetary Penalty

The Gainsharing Civil Monetary Penalty (CMP) prohibits hospitals from making payments to physicians to encourage reductions or limitations on services.

## Example

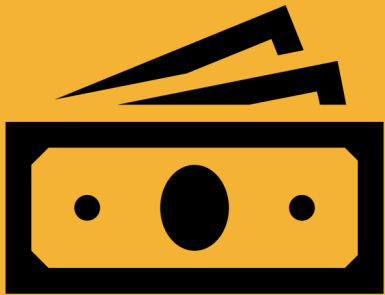
Hospitals may not increase a physician's salary as a reward for reduction in the number of procedures completed.



# Beneficiary Inducement CMP

The Beneficiary Inducement CMP prohibits individuals or entities from making an offer of remuneration or providing incentives that the person knows or should know is likely to influence the patient's choice of provider or supplier.

**Example:** A physician provides gift cards for Beneficiaries who complete the Annual Wellness Visit.



## Nominal Value Exception

Incentives may be provided as long as all of the following are met:

- The incentive is not cash or a cash equivalent
- The incentive is valued at less than **\$15** in each instance
- No individual receives more than **\$75** in incentives annually

# Medicare FWA Waivers

Shared Savings Program and Next Generation ACOs are allowed to utilize four waivers of the fraud, waste and abuse laws. The 4 waivers available to currently participating ACOs are:

- ACO Participation Waiver
- Shared Savings Distribution Waiver
- Compliance with Physician Self-Referral (Stark) Law Waiver
- Patient Incentives Waiver

ACOs can use these waivers in creative ways to help meet the Program's purposes of:

- Promoting accountability for quality, cost and overall care of Medicare Beneficiaries;
- Managing and Coordinating Care; and
- Encouraging investment in infrastructure and redesigned care processes.

**NONE OF THESE  
waivers apply to state laws!**

# ACO Participation Waiver

The ACO Participation Waiver allows the ACO to waive Stark Law, Federal Anti-Kickback Statute and the Gainsharing CMP. This waiver applies broadly to ACO-related arrangements during the term of the ACO's participation agreement, so long as the following are met:

## Participation

The ACO has entered into a Participation Agreement with CMS and remains in good standing.

## Governance

The ACO meets governance, leadership and management requirements.

## Relation to Purposes of the Program

ACO Board of Directors has made a determination that the arrangement is reasonably related to the purposes of the Program

## Documentation

The ACO meets certain documentation and public disclosure requirements.



# Shared Savings Distribution Waiver

The Shared Savings Distribution Waiver protects the ACO from Stark Law, Federal Anti-Kickback Statute and the Gainsharing CMP. This waiver applies to distributions and uses of shared savings payments earned under the Program, so long as all requirements are met.



The ACO has entered into a Participation Agreement with CMS and remains in good standing.



Shared Savings are earned by the ACO during the term of the Participation Agreement.



Payments are not made to knowingly induce a physician to reduce or limit medically necessary items or services to patients under the direct care of the physician.



The shared savings are distributed to ACO providers or used for activities that are reasonably related to the purposes of the Program.



# Compliance with Stark Law Waiver

The ACO can waive the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute and the Gainsharing CMP for ACO arrangements that implicate the Stark Law and meet an existing Stark Law Exception, so long as the following are met:

## Participation

The ACO has entered into a Participation Agreement with CMS and remains in good standing.

## Compliance with Stark Law

The relationship fully complies with one of the existing exceptions to the Stark Law. Exceptions are listed at 42 CFR 411.355 through 411.357.

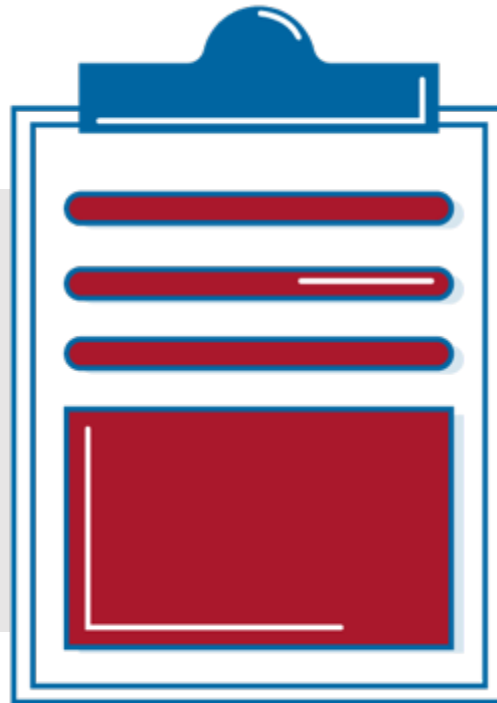
## Relation to Purposes of the Program

The financial relationship involved is reasonably related to the purposes of the Program.

# Patient Incentives Waiver

This allows ACOs to waive the Beneficiary Inducements CMP and the Federal Anti-Kickback Statute for medically-related incentives offered by ACOs.

Waiver prohibits the use of inducements as an incentive for the Beneficiary to receive services from, or remain in, the ACO.



Incentives cannot be cash or cash equivalents and must be offered to encourage preventive care and compliance with treatment regimes.

# Patient Incentives Waiver

While ACOs are still prohibited from using inducements as an incentive for the beneficiary to receive services from, or remain in, the ACO – this waiver does allow the ACO to provide incentives to encourage preventive care and compliance with treatment regimes so long as certain requirements are met.

## Key Requirements

- There must be a **reasonable connection** between the item/services provided and the medical care of the beneficiary.
- The item/services are in-kind (no cash or cash equivalents)
- The items/services advance one of the following clinical goals:
  - Preventive care
  - Adherence to a treatment or drug regime
  - Adherence to a follow-up care plan
  - Management of a chronic disease or condition



## Utilizing the Waivers

If you have an idea for how to utilize one of the waivers, contact the ACO Compliance Officer to ensure that:



Use of the waiver has been appropriately documented for audit purposes



All requirements are met



All necessary approvals are obtained

# Report Your Concerns!



**If you have a concern related to ACO activities or initiatives you have a duty to report.**

You can report at any time using one of these three options:

Contact the ACO Compliance Officer:  
[msspcompliance@nebraskahealthnetwork.com](mailto:msspcompliance@nebraskahealthnetwork.com)

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Submit to the Compliance Website:  
[www.nebraskahealthnetwork.com/compliance](http://www.nebraskahealthnetwork.com/compliance)

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Express your concerns to your supervisor

# Online Attestation

Please complete the online attestation to notify the Nebraska Health Network that you completed the Compliance Training.



# Join the Conversation!

NebraskaHealthNetwork.com



402.559.6464



nhn@nebraskahealthnetwork.com

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