



Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Overview

Fraud, waste and abuse cost the health care system billions of dollars every year and can increase risk to patients exposed to unnecessary procedures. To help reduce fraud, waste and abuse, please review this guide so you know how to identify and report it.

Additional Resources

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has information on their site about their efforts to reduce fraud, waste and abuse at va.gov/communitycare > About Us > Prevent Fraud, Waste and Abuse.

Fraud, Waste and Abuse Definitions

The following definitions are based on state and federal law:

Fraud

Fraud is the intentional misrepresentation of information to gain undeserved payment for a claim. Fraud is generally defined as knowingly and willfully executing, or attempting to execute, a scheme or artifice to defraud any health care benefit program or to obtain (by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations or promises) any of the money or property owned by, or under the custody or control of, any health care benefit.

Fraud occurs when a provider or staff member knowingly bills for services not provided or bills more costly services than provided, including billing for brand name drugs when generics are dispensed.



Waste

Waste is the spending of federal health care dollars on services that are unnecessary.

Examples include ordering excessive or unnecessary laboratory tests, or providing treatment that is inconsistent with a diagnosis. Finally, it is also misusing resources that are subject to recoupment.

Abuse

Abuse is a questionable practice that is inconsistent with accepted medical or business practices.

Examples include bending the rules such as providing unnecessary medical services, billing a more costly service/goods than those actually provided, billing separate services/goods required to be billed collectively, excessively charging for services or supplies, and misusing codes on a claim, such as up coding or unbundling codes.

Reporting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

Any information is helpful when investigating possible FWA. The VA CCN provider or staff member should record the tip by name and phone number or email address. Also, record the source of the tip. It is not necessary to have all of this information to report FWA. Here are types of information you may have: the provider or staff members name and location, the Veteran's name, the type of service, the date of service in question, any identifying number you may have, information on the service or item you are questioning, and the allegation issue or description.

You can report suspected FWA using the following options:

- **Phone:**
 - Region 1: 844-883-3461
 - Region 2: 844-883-3669
 - Region 3: 844-883-3684
- **Online:** provider.vacommunitycare.com. > Documents & Links > Fraud, Waste and Abuse Reporting Form
- **Mail:** Fraud, Waste and Abuse
3237 Airport Road
VA Community Care Network MS-61
La Crosse, WI 54603