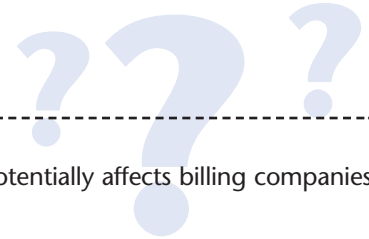


# Question of the Month



**Q:** We've received a call from Medicare to update lost information. Something didn't seem right about it. Should I be concerned about giving information to a Medicare caller?

**A:** Yes. The following is a fraud alert sent out in late December by Florida's Medicare carrier. As you all may know, Florida has the dubious honor of leading the country in abuse and fraud. Perhaps if this tactic is squashed here it won't spread to the rest of the country, but please inform your staffs to be extra careful. —*Bing Herald CHBME, bherald@mbs-net.com*

### Provider Enrollment Fraud Alert

This is to inform you that Medicare is aware of an organized group who is representing themselves as either a Medicare fraud investigator; or a Medicare employee from the enrollment, claim or audit units.

These callers tell the physician, or office personnel, that the Medicare computer system has had a malfunction and they need to update lost information. The callers may also say they need to update the physician E28099s provider record. They then request via telephone or fax the following information:

- E280A2: Copy of physician E28099s drivers license
- E280A2: Copy of physician E28099s social security number (SSN)
- E280A2: Unique physician identification number (UPIN)
- E280A2: Verification of education
- E280A2: Verification of practice location
- E280A2: Copy of physician E28099s medical license
- E280A2: Copy of patient E28099s charts for a specific period of time.

Once the entity receives this information, they falsify enrollment data using the physician E28099s name and request a change to their practice locations, telephone numbers, and pay-to-addresses.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has not suffered any computer system malfunction and are not calling providers requesting the above information be provided. If you should receive such a call, please try to verify the telephone number of the caller, and immediately notify your Medicare carrier that you suspect fraud.

CMS is committed to protect all Medicare providers/suppliers and to ensure that only those qualified make changes to enrollment data. CMS believes that with your help we can target those unscrupulous individuals that are looking to take advantage of you and the Medicare trust fund.

To report these calls please contact the toll-free number for First Coast Service Options, Inc. Medicare Part B Customer Service Center at 1-866-454-9007. F4808299

Source: CMS JSM-05154, December 27, 04

**A:** I see that this potentially affects billing companies in two ways:

1. The clerical staff could believe that a call from CMS is always legitimate, and incorrectly provide information.
2. The physicians, if they receive a call, may think there are billing problems, and they might provide the requested information.

I think this might be an issue for all billing company owners to be a little proactive about. Particularly since some carriers are posting this information.

—*Randal Roat, CHBME, CHC, rroat@trimedgroup.com.*

## Calendar of Events

- ▶ **March 15, 2005**  
**HBMA Live Webcast: Internal Assessment for Optimum Compliance**

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- ▶ **March 22-24, 2005**  
**Operational Compliance Conference**  
Grand Hyatt Atlanta in Buckhead • Atlanta, Georgia

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- ▶ **April 21-23, 2005**  
**Spring Educational Conference**  
Pointe South Mountain Resort • Phoenix, Arizona

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- ▶ **May 20, 2005**  
**Northeast Regional Meeting**  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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- ▶ **June 22-24, 2005**  
**Owners & Managers Conference** **SOLD OUT**  
Lahaina, Hawaii

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- ▶ **September 8-10, 2005**  
**Fall Annual Conference**  
Marriott Downtown – Magnificent Mile • Chicago, Illinois

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- ▶ **October 17-21 and 24-28, 2005**  
**HBMA Regional Roadshow**  
Look for specific locations to be announced

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- ▶ **October 27-29, 2005**  
**Owners & Managers Conference**  
Chateau Sonesta Hotel • New Orleans, Louisiana

Visit the Meeting Calendar at [www.hbma.com](http://www.hbma.com) for more information and to view additional educational programs as they are added.