

Project Overview and Purpose

In mid 2002, the Division of Aging and Adult Services received a grant from the Administration on Aging to carry out the **Senior Medicare/Medicaid Patrol Project**.

The grant provides funds to be used to:

- Facilitate a collaboration of aging network agencies and other appropriate entities;
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of recruiting and training retired professionals;
- Teach Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries how to better monitor what is paid on their behalf, and to effectively report any discrepancies they find.

The goals of the project are to:

- Increase public awareness of health care fraud,
- Reduce and prevent the incidence of fraudulent practices,
- Develop a community of active fraud detectors,
- Encourage health care consumers to become active in monitoring all aspects of their care, services and payment for services, and
- Reach out to special populations, including minorities, people with disabilities, rural and isolated consumers, and residents of nursing homes.

The Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) has a full-time Project Administrator and has provided grant funding to three Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) for this program:

- CareLink, the Central Arkansas AAA in North Little Rock,
- AAA of West Central Arkansas, in Hot Springs, and
- AAA of Northwest Arkansas, in Harrison.

The Planing and Service Areas (PSAs) of these three AAAs include over 50% of the 40,000 Medicare beneficiaries in the state of Arkansas. Each of the participating AAAs has hired a part-time Project Coordinator to recruit volunteers, help train those volunteers, and serve as the focal point for all consumer complaints from their areas. The directors of these AAAs and their project coordinators will serve on the Statewide Advisory Council, which will direct the grant activities.

The Statewide Advisory Council is a major component of the project, and consists of key persons in the areas of aging and Medicare and Medicaid fraud detection and prosecution. It includes representatives from:

- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI);
- The Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
- The Department of Justice (DOJ);
- The Arkansas Attorney General;
- AdvanceMed, the Arkansas Medicare Program Safeguard Contractor (PSC);
- The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH);
- The State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIIP);
- Advocacy organizations;
- Organizations of retired professionals; and
- Organizations representing minority populations and people with disabilities.

The Advisory Council will meet quarterly to provide support for and guidance for the project. The Council will define the content of the material used to train volunteers, the methods used to recruit volunteers, and the strategies used to reach out to rural communities, minority populations, people with disabilities and residents of long-term care facilities. The current Advisory Council membership is shown in the training manual.

At the end of 2002, there were 54 Senior Medicare/Medicaid Patrol projects across the country. Since the inception of the first projects in 1997, 35,000 volunteers have been trained to detect Medicare and Medicaid fraud, waste and abuse. Over 1.1 million beneficiaries have been educated in 200,000 training sessions. Twenty-three thousand complaints have been reported, resulting in investigative agency action on 2,300 of these referrals. The OIG, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Administration on Aging (AoA) continue to strongly support these projects, and congressional support for continued funding has also remained strong. The deterrent effect of these projects is believed to have been even greater than the measurable impact.

We believe that one of the most important aspects of this grant is the focus on informed patient verification of services, a fraud control missing in most healthcare systems.

The project will monitor its performance according to the OIG set of performance and outcomes measures contained in this manual. Volunteers will record and forward all data collected to the AAA project coordinators. Arkansas data will then be compared with national data (available twice a year) for each project across the country.