Physician Arrangements

Road Map
- Why spend valuable resources auditing Physician Arrangements?
- What data to gather in developing the question sets.
- Conduct a mock audit of a Medical Directorship.
- Define and interpret audit findings.
- How to report results to management and legal effectively.
- Distinguish roles of compliance officer and legal counsel during corrective action.

"Failure to structure physician contracts to comply with Stark and Anti-Kickback Statutes can easily result in seven-digit fines and repayments. Such violations can also adversely affect the status of tax-exempt entities. If you have not done so recently, now is time to audit your physician contracts to ensure compliance."

-Hawley Troxell, posted in Health Law 1992

Just the Facts...
1. Why spend valuable resources auditing Physician Arrangements?

Why? It's the Law

- Physician Self-Referral Law ("Stark")
  - Physician may not refer patients nor bill Medicare unless arrangement fits within a regulatory safe harbor.
- Anti Kickback Statute
  - A criminal law that prohibits the knowing and willful payment of "remuneration" to induce or reward patient referrals.
- False Claims Act
  - It is illegal to submit claims for payment to Medicare or Medicaid that you know or should know are false or fraudulent.

Why? Save Yourself from Trouble

- Anti Kickback Statute Penalties
- Stark Penalties
- False Claims Act Penalties
- Mitigating Provider Liability
  - Refund overpayments
  - Whistleblowers
- The Regulatory Climate
  - Increases in Government Enforcement
  - Allegation that Compensation is not Fair Market Value, not Commercially Reasonable, and that Compensation Takes into Account Referrals
Physician Arrangements

First Things First!

- Get your posse together.

Plan
- Occurrence
- Scope of Payments
- Sample Size
- Endorsement

Create Formalized Plan
- Who is accountable?
- Use SMART goals
- Decide How Often?
  - Monthly, Quarterly, Semi-annually, it's your choice!
  - Have a routine in which there is an even flow
- Layout Scope of Payments
- Determine your Sample Size and Method
- Get backing from Legal, AP, Governing Body

Types of Physician Agreements

- Call Coverage
- Chairperson
- Medical Director
- Employment
- Leases
- Honorariums
- Teaching
- Income Guarantees
- Subsidy/Stipends
- Clinical Services
- Management & Billing
1. Gathering the data and developing the question sets

Gathering Data
- Physician Contract List wi/in-house Responsibilities
- Actual Contact
  - schedule describing service
- Detailed List of Physician Payments
  - Date paid
  - Amount paid and or requested
  - Services rendered
- Company Crosswalk Chart
- Physician Call/Time Sheets or Attestations
  - Physician’s signature
  - Approver’s signature
- List of Fair Market Values
  - company’s appropriate productivity-based compensation formula or benchmark surveys

Question Sets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the agreement specify the amount of Physician compensation?</th>
<th>Is there a properly signed agreement specifying services?</th>
<th>Does the agreement replace the pre-existing agreement?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the compensation structure measure the volume or value of the physician’s referrals?</td>
<td>Does the agreement incorporate or otherwise reference other agreement between hospital and physician?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there evidence of FMV determination?</td>
<td>Did the appropriate authorizing parties sign?</td>
<td>Is the agreement currently effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the term of the agreement for at least 1 year?</td>
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2. Setting up Regulatory Matters to match Audit Questions

Medical Directorship

Stark Law Requirement
- Arrangement is set out in writing, is signed by the parties, and specifies the services covered.

Audit Question
- Is there a properly signed agreement specifying the services to be performed?
Scope of Services

Stark Law Requirement
- The arrangement covers all of the services to be furnished by the physician to the entity.

Audit Question
- Does the agreement incorporate or otherwise reference other agreements between Hospital and Physician?

Reasonable & Necessary Test

Stark Law Requirement
- The aggregate services covered by the arrangement do not exceed those that are reasonable and necessary for the legitimate business purposes of the arrangement.

Audit Question
- Does the agreement comply with the averages for services performed by other Medical Directors of the same specialty for the Hospital?

Time Frame

Stark Law Requirement
- The duration of each agreement is at least 1 year.
- If terminated within the first year, was another agreement entered into?

Audit Question
- Is the term of the agreement for at least 1 year?
- Does this agreement replace a pre-existing agreement?
3-Prong Compensation Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stark Law Requirement</th>
<th>Audit Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The compensation to be paid over the term of each arrangement:</td>
<td>o Does the agreement specify the amount of physician compensation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o is set in advance;</td>
<td>o Is there evidence of FMV determination?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o does not exceed FMV;</td>
<td>o Does the compensation structure measure the volume or value of the physician’s referrals?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o does not take into account the volume or value of any referrals or other business generated between the parties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Audit Question:

- Does the agreement specify the amount of physician compensation?
- Is there evidence of FMV determination?
- Does the compensation structure measure the volume or value of the physician’s referrals?

3. Conducting the Mock Audit

Can you spot all of the issues in this mock arrangement?

The Payment

- A check of your AP system populates this timesheet and corresponding payment data.
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Properly Executed Agreement

- Is there a properly signed agreement specifying the services to be performed?

Other Business Relationships

- Does the agreement incorporate or otherwise reference other agreements between Hospital and Physician?

Commercial Reasonableness & Business Justification

- Does the agreement fall within the medium of services performed by other Medical Directors of the same specialty for the Hospital?
**Duration**
- Is the term of the agreement for at least 1 year?

**Pre-existing Agreement**
- Does this agreement replace a pre-existing agreement?
  - Does the current agreement:  
    - Replace another one within the first year (for the same or similar services)?  
    - Overlap with an agreement currently in effect?  
    - Specifically mention that it replaces another agreement?

You may have to do some digging! Check your central contract repository.

**Compensation**
- Does the agreement specify the amount of Physician compensation?
- Does the compensation structure measure the volume or value of the Physician’s referrals?
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2/24/2017

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Fair Market Value Analysis
- Is there evidence of FMV determination?

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Organization Specific
- Did the appropriate authorizing parties sign the agreement?
- Is the agreement currently effective?

What are your organizations priorities about physician contracts?

These would make great audit questions!

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Documenting Findings
4. Reporting results to management and legal effectively

The Value of Knowing Your Leaders to Ensure a Resolution
- Results from these audits can be humbling for many in leadership.
- Present your findings in the way your leader will best perceive the information as an opportunity, rather than an attack.
- Use graphs and be prepared to show cause of why the audit & its questions were structured that way.
5. Distinguishing roles of compliance officer and legal counsel during corrective action

Compliance Officer & Legal Counsel Relations 101
- The lines between legal counsel and compliance officer can often be blurred without a thorough and formal understanding of the job duties of each.
- Be cautious and refrain from offering legal advice related to the functionality of the agreement.
- Regardless of reporting relationship, don’t underestimate the importance of having the support of your General Counsel.
- Legal Counsel should prioritize these efforts based on the government’s scrutiny of this area of enforcement.

Questions & Discussion
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