



## GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

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Department of Health  
Medicaid Program

June 4, 2020

Mr. Laurie H. Battaglia  
Director - Division of State Program Integrity  
Investigations and Audits Group  
Center for Program Integrity  
Via email: [laurie.battaglia@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:laurie.battaglia@cms.hhs.gov)

RE: PROGRAM INTEGRITY LEAD UNIT REQUIREMENT

Dear Ms. Battaglia:

The Puerto Rico Medicaid Program (PRMP) began to develop the Program Integrity Unit in October 1, 2018. At that time the Medicaid Program hired the Program Integrity Director. This leadership position reports directly to the Medicaid Program Executive Director and the Puerto Rico Secretary of Health.

Using the 42 CFR sub part 455 the Integrity Director developed procedures as well all the internal policies. Also, the Integrity Director began hiring more professionals with proven experience in the healthcare area. The following six (6) positions and employees are part of the Program Integrity Unit:

- 1- (1) Program Integrity Director – María D. García-Ducos
- 2- (2) Registered Nurses
  - Javier Vega-Crespo and Limary J. López-Pérez
- 3- (2) Program Integrity Investigators
  - Myrna Serrano-Escobar and Nalla Rojas-Dávila
- 4- (1) Program Policy Analyst – María de los A. González

All these positions were hired through a contract with ManPower. However, on January 2020, we started working with human resources office from the Department of Health and with the PR Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to create a career position in the Medicaid Program to be able to hire the Lead as a Government official.

This effort paid off and we received on May 26, 2020 the approval on the creation of the position of the Program Director I for the Medicaid Program Integrity effective immediately (copy of the letter included).

Currently, we have the authorization to appoint María D. García-Ducos as the Program Integrity Director as a Government Official.

Program Integrity mission is to protect the Medicaid Trust funds against losses from fraud and abuse and other improper payments, and to improve the integrity of the health care system.

The mission is achieved through the activities of prevention, detection, investigation, referrals and prosecution of fraud, waste and abuse.

These activities include:

- Monitoring of claims patterns
- Auditing to ensure compliance with the MCOs contracts and agreements,
- Pursuing civil and criminal prosecution where evidence indicates fraudulent activity has occurred
- Money restitution where warranted.

Program Integrity pursue a variety of strategies to address fraud, waste, and abuse, such:

- Desk audits and reviews
- Preliminary and complete investigations
- Share information with the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) at the Puerto Rico Department of Justice.

The main task of the Integrity Unit is: To ensure compliance, efficiency, accountability and coordination within Medicaid and its contracted entities in detecting and preventing fraud, waste, and abuse (FWA).

Since February 2019, The Program Integrity Unit is in an ongoing process of working with the MMIS tools and a manual case tracking procedure.

The PI team perform data mining to detect providers to be audited. When the team finds outliers providers or high risk in payment data, they prepared a lead for investigation and further actions. Every month PI teams has a meeting to discuss new fraud trends and review statistics.

The current Memorandum of understanding between Medicaid and ASES, give to ASES the responsibility for managing the MCO's contract. The ASES contract with the MCO's has description of fraud, waste and abuse activities and the MCO's responsibilities.

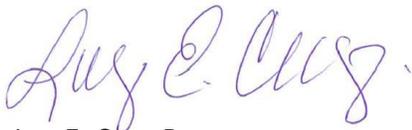
Puerto Rico Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) started in January 2019. The teams of PRPIU, PRMFCU and OIG, meets on a monthly basis to evaluate leads information and possible cases to prosecute.

In the next couple of months, The Program Integrity Unit will develop the following initiatives:

- Filling more staff positions and mature the team in order to strengthen PRMISS Operations and Program Integrity
- Collaborate with other states to identify other methods to enhance the PRMMIS and Medicaid Enterprise to support the PIU with results that can be led to recommendation for policies changes, amendments to the State plan.
- Setting policies and procedures for the MCO's that will allow for controlling duplicate billing, appropriate use of billing codes, recommend new rules or policies as Prior authorization for optional services
- Beginning on July 2020 provider enrollment will be in place at the Medicaid side, we will have better provider profiling and will allow PI to identify providers that should not be enroll based on history or allow enrollment with restrictions.
- Establish better recoupment policies and procedures.
- Stronger audits and oversight functions increase the members eligibility oversight and enhance enforcement of state compliance with federal rules.

Puerto Rico has been battered by natural disasters such as two major hurricanes on September 2017 and one major earthquake on January 2020 and despite all we have been able to work this requirement with the best of our abilities. If you need more information or other documentation, in order to comply fully with the Subtitle B, Section 202 of H.R. 1856 Public Law 116-94. let us know.

Cordially,



Luz E. Cruz-Romero  
Executive Director  
Medicaid Program

Enclosure

- c: Donald Carr, CMS, CPI  
Nicole McKnight, CMS Region II  
Ricardo Holligan, CMS Region II  
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