

## Opening Remarks—2009 SMP National Conference

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### Introduction

- Good morning and welcome to the 2009 SMP National Conference!
- I am thrilled to see this wonderful turnout of SMP staff and volunteers, SMP Center staff, AoA staff from across the country, and SMP partners here today to join us as we kick off the 8<sup>th</sup> SMP national conference held since the program's start back in 1997.
- Before I start, I would like to extend a big "thank you" to Shirley Merner, Ginny Paulson, Heather Flory, Maureen Patterson and Carol Dahms from the SMP Resource Center, as well as to Hillary Turner from AIR, the Center's logistics contractor, for their tireless work in planning and coordinating the many details that contribute to the success of this conference. Close to a year's worth of work went into the conference by these individuals and others— thanks to each of you for a great team effort!
- And I can't go on much further without mentioning that I am thrilled to announce that this year, for the first time in our SMP history, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Sebelius, will address our conference as the keynote speaker! What a wonderful recognition of the value of our program and of your work—I know you are as excited as I am to hear from our Secretary about her interest and work in the fight against health care fraud.
- As you know, the theme of this year's conference is "Embracing Excellence", and I hope that you will find that the conference offers excellence--not only in theme, but in the speakers, panels, networking and information shared during these next 3 days.
- In addition, we have worked hard to ensure that the conference showcases and promotes excellence in the work of the program— excellence that will

continually improve our service to Medicare beneficiaries, their families and caregivers, AND enhance our effectiveness in fighting health care fraud, error and abuse.

- And what are the ways that we as a program, and you as SMPs can enhance and embrace excellence in your work?
  - by ensuring our message—conveyed in community settings around the country—is based on current and accurate information, and presented effectively;
  - by working to ensure that our volunteers—the foundation and life blood of our program, are effectively trained, supported and rewarded,
  - by forming and maintaining new partnerships that expand our capacity to better serve beneficiaries across our states, by increasing resources and volunteers, opening information channels, and creating new outreach forums;
  - We can embrace excellence by developing new skills, strategies and awareness to effectively reach out to individuals who are most challenging to reach—those who have limited English speaking capability or literacy, those who are isolated, and those who are frail;
  - by ensuring that we are using the many resources at our disposal—especially new technologies and media strategies-- to stay informed and linked –this is so important for SMPs as we work to maintain our role in our communities and across the nation, as trusted experts in health care fraud education, prevention and detection;
  - and, as we work to stay current, “in the know” and linked in, embracing excellence also involves promoting visibility and awareness of the SMP program and its message of fraud prevention using a variety of new, innovative approaches, strategies and tools.
  - Finally, embracing excellence means demonstrating the value of the SMP program through thorough, accurate collection of data on your program activities, accomplishments, and the results of your work so that we can share your outstanding efforts with those in leadership who

have continued to believe in and support the program—HHS leadership, the Congress, and OMB.

## Agenda

- Our conference agenda focuses on each of these program areas where we continue to strive toward and embrace excellence. We have included panels, workshops and discussions that focus on providing new skills, knowledge, information, partners, and opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of your program. Real useful information for you to take back home and use. And much more...
- Our first panel this morning goes right to the heart of our work: a panel of experts on health care fraud, initiatives and referrals. We have lined up lead fraud fighters from CMS, PSC and the OIG to share the latest on their work at the top and in the field to attack Medicare and Medicaid fraud.
- To accommodate the Secretary's schedule, we will be hearing from the Fraud Panel in two parts: two speakers prior to the Secretary's address, then a break, and then the final two fraud panel presenters.
- We heard from you last conference that you would like more opportunity to network with your SMP colleagues and AoA project officers. We encourage you to start that process during the SMP networking luncheon today, to be held in the Diplomat Ballroom next door.
- This afternoon, the focus is on improving how we target and reach hard to serve populations. We will learn from the National Hispanic SMP Project new effective strategies for serving Hispanic older adults, and later gain some very practical tips for working effectively in serving non-English speaking individuals with interpreters.
- I am really looking forward to our final panel today—our 7 SMP Integration Grantees will share a preview of the new innovative strategies they have planned and underway for reaching rural and tribal populations with the SMP

message. You can expect to see the dissemination of these new approaches at the end of the SMP Integration grant period, a year from now.

- This evening I would invite each of you to join us in the Diplomat Ballroom next door for the SMP Recognition Event. We will recognize outstanding SMP performance and achievements over the course of the past year. We also have introductions to make and a few surprises!
- Tomorrow we start bright and early with an invitation to meet our new Office of Grants Management director, Rimas Liogys, and Grants Management Specialist, Sean Lewis in a Breakfast Listening session. Here's a chance to discuss questions about the grants process, reports, match, and other issues that you have been wondering about, with the AoA grants experts.
- Tomorrow we focus our attention on embracing and enhancing excellence in our SMP volunteer programs. We are very fortunate to have the internationally recognized leader in volunteer management, with specialty in volunteer risk management, Ms. Linda Graff, as our featured presenter tomorrow morning.
- Linda will first share the landscape of contemporary volunteering, helping us to understand current trends impacting volunteers, volunteer work and volunteer program management. Linda will provide the context of volunteer involvement, and increase our understanding of the relationship of volunteer program management to risk management. Linda's presentation tomorrow morning will serve as an introductory step in our plans to ensure quality SMP services by enhancing excellence in our SMP Volunteer Management Program.
- The spotlight on SMP volunteers continues tomorrow with one of the highlights of our conference: the Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. During the luncheon, the Assistant Secretary for Aging will recognize 10 outstanding SMP volunteers for their contributions to their programs and the beneficiaries they serve. We welcome all the SMP volunteers here with us and look forward to this special ceremony honoring their service.

- The focus on volunteers will continue after lunch. We are extremely excited to unveil our new National SMP Volunteer Training Program tomorrow afternoon, providing an overview of training program plans, expectations and Training Kit materials. This session will be presented by our partners in this effort from the American Institutes for Research.
- On Thursday, we offer a Breakfast Listening Session for all that may be interested in visiting with Hilary Dalin, from My Medicare Matters, National Council on Aging. Hilary has provided her Medicare expertise to the SMP network in webinars on Medicare Advantage and disenrollment, and provides a wealth of expertise on Medicare issues. Come with your questions!
- The Thursday conference session begins with an update from the SMP Resource Center. The Center has lots of news to share--be ready for a new and exciting unveiling.....no clues today... you will just have to wait to see the latest in new tools and technical support the Center has to offer!
- Next up are two of our own SMP directors who will demonstrate their innovative and well-received group educational session presentations. We asked for your nominations and appreciated all of you who submitted your successful practices.
- We are in our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of SMART FACTS implementation and I want to congratulate many of you for working very hard to enhance excellence in your data collection and reporting via this system. We are offering 3 breakout opportunities Thursday morning for specific SMART FACTS training: one will enhance your understanding on how to use reports in SMART FACTS, another will assist you in OIG performance data collection and reporting, and a third will enhance skills in complex issues data entry.
- We know that strategically developed partnerships are essential in expanding the capacity of the SMP program to fight health care fraud and better serve senior consumers. During Thursday's luncheon, you will hear from leaders from 4 key organizations that we believe offer great new opportunities for partnering with SMPs at the state and local levels: the law enforcement community with TRIADs, Service Coordinators at senior housing

developments, the aging network via Area Agencies on Aging, and consumer awareness and protection with the Federal Trade Commission. Several of these organizations are also exhibiting outside this room—I hope each of you come away with plans and tools for enhancing the reach of your program with these new partners.

- Many of you have shared with us that you would like the opportunity to carry on the networking and sharing experiences of the bi-yearly regional conferences during this national conference. Thursday afternoon we will break out by regions to share successes, challenges and your vision for the future of the SMP program. The outcomes from these regional meeting will be shared during our final conference session.
- As in past conferences, I look forward to having an opportunity to meet with you to hear directly about the issues you face, concerns you wish to share and suggestions for program improvement.
- So, as you see, our next three days are devoted to enhancing and embracing SMP Program excellence by:
  - enhancing your capability to fight health care fraud with current information on fraud trends and initiatives,
  - improving volunteer management through new national training program support;
  - expanding program capacity through the introduction of new partnering opportunities;
  - offering new technical support tools to keep you connected and current, and
  - enhancing your efforts to reach those in hardest to serve through new innovative outreach and communications strategies.

### Conclusion

- Embracing excellence is more than a conference theme....it means improving overall program quality. It means working smartly and creatively and

effectively....Excellence means becoming a more unified, professional, effective and visible national program. More importantly, embracing excellence in our program efforts will help ensure that we reach more seniors with the fraud prevention message, educate and assist them more effectively, and report these activities more fully and accurately. I know that I speak for the SMP Center when I say that it is our hope that this conference will inspire, inform and motivate your continued great work!

- Thanks to each of you for what you do, for supporting the program in so many ways, for your commitment to protecting beneficiaries and our Medicare dollars through your work, and most of all for empowering seniors to prevent healthcare fraud!