

**2009 SMP National Conference
Closing Remarks
Barbara Dieker, AoA**

Thanks

- I would like to start by once again thank the SMP Resource Center for their outstanding leadership and hard work in planning, coordinating and facilitating all the many details that made this conference a success.
- And not just their work on the conference, but also a big thanks for the wonderful work on the new website, the new volunteer training program, the new fact sheets and the continued support that is provided to each SMP project that is so important to your work.
- I would also like to thank Hillary Turner of AIR for her amazing work in planning and coordinating all of the logistics of this conference and for the wonderful hotel staff who have been so gracious and helpful during the past three days.
- I would like to thank all of you SMPs for your comments, enthusiasm, and continued commitment to the mission of empowering seniors to prevent healthcare fraud, and the SMP volunteers for all that you do in support of that mission.
- I would also like to thank AoA staff—including regional project officers and Regional Administrators, and Central office SMP staff—Barbara Lewis and Doris Summey-- for your continued support of the SMP projects and their work.

Embracing Excellence

- This conference has, I believe, provided each of you opportunities to embrace and enhance excellence in your programs. We have:
 - learned current health care fraud information from the experts;
 - gained strategies for serving non-english-speaking, rural and tribal elders;
 - demonstrated new tools, approaches and plans for improving the quality of SMP volunteer training and management;
 - strengthened our skills and knowledge for reporting the results of our work; and
 - shared successful practices, partnership opportunities, concerns challenges and our future program vision.
- AND, of course there were some special moments—
 - The Secretary's message;
 - The media attention;

- The emotions of our volunteer recognition event; and
 - The joy of the volunteers' presence.
- All have embraced, enhanced and celebrated excellence in our program.

Volunteer Training Program

- A final word on our volunteer training program...
- I am so very proud of the Center and all those who contributed to the SMP Training Manual and Implementation Guide. There were many, many months of preparation –
 - collecting the best SMP training programs from many of you;
 - adapting information from these;
 - pulling from CMS, SSA and other source materials;
 - incorporating review and comments by stakeholders, CMS, Center partners and AoA; AND
 - ensuring the program was designed for adult learners through inputs from adult learning experts.
- Many of the hard decisions were about the degree of depth of the training, i.e. – what is the appropriate level of competency, knowledge, and skill to expect for SMP volunteers, in order to do their jobs effectively?
- We have been gratified by the majority of you who have shared your thanks and positive initial feedback on the training program and endorsement of the importance of ensuring consistency and quality in our SMP volunteer workforce.
- We have also heard concerns and suggestions voiced by some—about the need for state-specific tailoring, about specific corrections, about timelines and expectations for the pilot year ahead.
- We have listened and please know that we have heard you!
- All these issues will be addressed in a message to you early next week. It will:
 - Provide appropriate options for tailoring to include state-specific information;
 - Request submission of identified errors (or suspected errors);
 - Contain special provision for SHIP projects to substitute their SHIP training for Chapter 2 without documentation;
 - Provide for follow-up discussion of issues earlier than previously planned (September) via webinars; and
 - Clarify expectations during the pilot period.
- I ask that you please take the time to read the volunteer training foundations manual through-- digest it, and then decide how you wish to pilot it.

Conclusion

- We are part of a team; a team that is working to achieve excellence in the SMP program.

- Achieving excellence will in turn enhance our credibility as trusted experts in health care fraud prevention, identification and reporting.
- We at AoA and the Center hope you have gained new information, been inspired, and found new friends and partners to support your work and your efforts to embrace excellence during this conference.
- Have a safe trip home and thanks again to each of you for your efforts to empower seniors to prevent healthcare fraud!