

# SMART FACTS: Simple Inquiry vs. One-on-one Counseling

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One common question SMPs have about data entry in SMART FACTS has to do with the difference between a Simple Inquiry and a One-on-one Counseling session. According to the OIG definitions:

A **Simple Inquiry** is brief contact initiated by a consumer and/or beneficiary that is resolved with minimal time and research or review. Simple Inquiries typically do not require individual demographic or private personal information such as a Medicare number or information about a medical condition.

A **One-on-one Counseling** session is a meeting between an SMP representative and an individual beneficiary and/or his or her family for the purpose of discussing or gathering information about potential health care fraud, waste or abuse. One-on-one Counseling Sessions may include beneficiary counseling, information gathering or information sharing.

## Beyond the OIG Definitions

You've probably seen these definitions many times before, yet there is still some confusion about which category some conversations with beneficiaries fall into.

One clarification was noted at the July 2008 OIG Report Web Conference: *A conversation could also be considered a One-on-one Counseling Session if the topic relates to scams, identity theft, inappropriate marketing or consumer fraud.*

For further guidance, use this simple checklist to help determine whether a conversation is a Simple Inquiry or a One-on-one Counseling session. Most importantly, keep in mind that your SMP doesn't get more or less credit for a Simple Inquiry vs. a One-on-one Counseling session. Both types of SMP activity go on the OIG Report, and both are good. If it's too close to call, just use your best judgment – either way is fine!

### Is the conversation the result of SMP Outreach and Education activities?

One-on-one Counseling sessions are typically the direct result of a group educational session or other outreach activity.

### Did the conversation take place face-to-face or by phone?

Most phone conversations are Simple Inquiries; however, if a phone conversation is a follow-up to a group educational session it could be considered a One-on-one Counseling session.

### How much time did you spend actually discussing the question or issue?

If the amount of time addressing the question or concern is brief, it is more likely to be a Simple

Inquiry. If it is not brief, it's more likely to be a One-on-one Counseling session.

### **These are Simple Inquiries**

A beneficiary calls and wants to obtain a *Medicare and You* handbook. Your program does not stock copies of the handbook but you give her the phone number of the state SHIP program to obtain a copy.

A beneficiary calls and wants a copy of a publication that your SMP project recently released. You request the caller's name and address to send the publication.

A beneficiary calls with a question about the effective date of his Part D plan enrollment because of the Annual Enrollment Period.

### **These ARE One-on-one Counseling**

A beneficiary requests SMP counseling about her concern after or during an SMP-sponsored event.

A beneficiary calls, after having attended an SMP-sponsored event, with personal concerns about possible fraud, waste or abuse.

An SMP staff member or volunteer offers proactive one-on-one outreach to provide information, ask questions and/or offer assistance.

### **These are NOT One-on-one Counseling**

Answering questions in front of the entire group after a presentation

Providing basic SMP information to individuals at an exhibit (unless the conversation evolves into discussion of their unique circumstances)

Handing beneficiaries SMP brochures or tip sheets routinely after SHIP counseling sessions and mentioning they should call if they have fraud concerns - this is a dissemination activity!

**NOTE:** Carefully following the definitions and guidelines for One-on-one Counseling will not only ensure OIG Report accuracy but also will reduce data entry burden. Entering dissemination activities as One-on-one Counseling increases data entry work load.

For other examples of Simple Inquiries, One-on-one Counseling sessions and Complex Issues, see the *SMART FACTS Operations Manual* (Chapter 3: pages 3, 7 and 8; Chapter 6: page 19) and/or view the SMART FACTS FAQs recording at [www.smpresource.com](http://www.smpresource.com). (Click on SMP Resources, then SMART FACTS.) ◆