

C.A.R.E.S. Pharmacy Network Newsletter

Issue 27
(Q2 2025)



Please visit the C.A.R.E.S.
Pharmacy Network webpage
at: <https://alpharmacycares.org/>

Editor: Oluchukwu Ezeala, PhD Student

Hello C.A.R.E.S Pharmacy Network members!

Welcome to the second half of the year. The C.A.R.E.S team and I want to thank you for remaining an active part of our network and for your continued dedication to serving your patients, especially our older adults.

In this edition of our quarterly newsletter, we are once again sharing resources to help you better support

your patients and protect your practice. One of the articles offers helpful tips and resources you can share with your patients who are caregivers, to help them care for themselves while supporting a family member or loved one with Alzheimer's disease. We have also included a piece on the Civil Monetary Penalties Law, the final article in our fraud prevention series. It outlines what the law covers, the consequences of violating it, and how you and your staff can stay compliant.

Additionally, we are highlighting some of our latest blog posts which you can find on the [C.A.R.E.S website](https://alpharmacycares.org/). The posts cover topics like the recent expansion of RSV vaccination recommendations to adults aged 50 to 59 years, assistance programs for older adults in Alabama, recognizing signs of depression in older adults and the Senior Medicare Patrol tracker app for reporting fraud e.t.c. We encourage you to visit the blog regularly to stay updated.

Of course, our fun fact feature is here as well — a little something to brighten your day while you learn something new. And don't forget to remind your patients to stay up to date on their vaccinations as we head into flu and RSV season.

Lastly, if you haven't yet taken advantage of our free continuing education programs, they are still available for you at <https://www.alpharmacycares.org/continuing-education-program>.

we look forward to connecting with you in our next newsletter! Have a good read!

Issue 27 Highlights:

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Helping Alzheimer's Caregivers Stay Healthy and Supported

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Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disorder that primarily affects adults aged 60 and older. It is the sixth leading cause of death among adults aged 65 and above.¹ Patients with Alzheimer's often experience symptoms such as memory loss, difficulty completing routine daily tasks, changes in mood, personality, or behavior, and poor judgment.² These symptoms make it difficult for them to care for themselves and require constant supervision from a caregiver.

Most individuals with Alzheimer's receive care at home, typically from loved ones, including family members and friends.³ Caregivers for Alzheimer's patients tend to spend more time providing care compared to other caregivers and are more likely to experience stress, depression, and anxiety.³ While caregiving can be meaningful and rewarding, it can also be overwhelming, sometimes to the point where caregivers neglect their own health and well-being.³ This can affect their mental, physical, emotional, and social health.

According to the CDC, providing the best care to Alzheimer's patients requires caregivers to also prioritize their own self-care. Caregivers are encouraged to take periodic breaks when needed by reaching out to friends or family for support or using caregiving programs offered by the state when available.^{4, 5} For example, the [Caregiver Assistance Program](#) in Alabama provides temporary respite care either in a home or nursing home setting, allowing caregivers time to rest and recharge.⁶ Other important self-care tips include eating regular, nutritious meals, getting adequate sleep and exercise, and setting aside time for hobbies and activities they enjoy. Joining a caregiver support group can also offer emotional relief and connection with others going through similar experiences.^{4, 5} The family Caregiver Alliance support both online and in-person support groups for caregivers.⁷ They also offer CareNav®, a free online resource that helps caregivers find services, support, and information tailored to their needs.⁷

To further help ease the stress of caregiving, Alzheimer's caregivers might also

find it helpful to use the CDC's caregiving [plan](#). This plan can help them keep track of the patient's healthcare providers, medications, insurance information, care settings, and caregiving responsibilities.

As pharmacists, you can play an important role in supporting Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers by sharing information about local resources, respite care services, and tools like the CDC's Caregiving Plan. You can also help educate caregivers on caring for their own health, managing stress, and staying connected to support systems, making a meaningful difference in both patient care and caregiver well-being.

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Helping Dementia Caregivers 2024. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/caregiving/resources/helping-alzheimers-caregivers.html>.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's 2024. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/alzheimers-dementia/signs-symptoms/alzheimers.html>.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Caregivers of a Person with Alzheimer's Disease or a Related Dementia 2024. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/caregiving/about/index.html>.
4. Alzheimer's.gov. Tips for Caregivers and Families of People With Dementia 2025. Available from: <https://www.alzheimers.gov/life-with-dementia/tips-caregivers>.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Healthy Habits: Caring for Yourself When Caring for Another 2024. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/caregiving/caring-for-yourself/index.html>.
6. Alabama Department of Senior Services. Alabama cares support for caregivers. 2023. Available from: <https://alabamaageline.gov/alabama-cares/>.
7. Family Caregiver Alliance. Connecting caregivers. 2025. Available from: <https://www.caregiver.org/connecting-caregivers/>.

Understanding Medicare and Medicaid Fraud-- Civil Monetary Penalties Law

Amatallah Saulawa, BA

This article is the last in our series on Medicare and Medicaid fraud laws. It describes the Civil Monetary Penalties Law, which is a consequence that can be imposed by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for various violations.¹

What is the Civil Monetary Penalties Law?

Previously in our series, we described 4 different important laws regarding fraud and abuse: the False Claims Act, the Anti-Kickback Statute, the Physician Self-Referral Law (Stark Law) and the Exclusion Statute. Like the Exclusion Statute, the Civil Monetary Penalties Law is one way the OIG penalizes individuals who have conducted certain violations, including those who have broken some of the fraud laws previously described in our series. Some violations include^{1,2,3}:

- Presenting fraudulent claims
- Violating the Anti-Kickback Statute
- Making misrepresentations on applications to federal government programs (in breach of the Exclusion Statute)
- Engaging in fraud related to Department of Health and Human Services grants

What are the Consequences?

While the Civil Monetary Penalties Law allows the OIG to seek penalties for misconduct, the exact amount of the penalty varies. However, the fines can be steep. Depending on what regulation was broken, the OIG may impose a fine ranging from \$10,000-\$50,000 per violation.¹

How Can I Protect Myself?

- **Stay informed.** There are various laws regulating Medicare and Medicaid claims to prevent fraud. The Civil Monetary Penalties Law applies to all of the fraud laws that we have previously covered.² Reading the previous articles

in our series can help you stay informed on what behavior can lead to OIG penalties. Additionally, ensure that all the personnel in your organization are informed about what types of behavior are in violation of the federal regulations.

- **Be transparent.** Healthcare organizations are required to report suspected fraudulent activity. Not doing so can lead to the imposition of even more fines.⁴

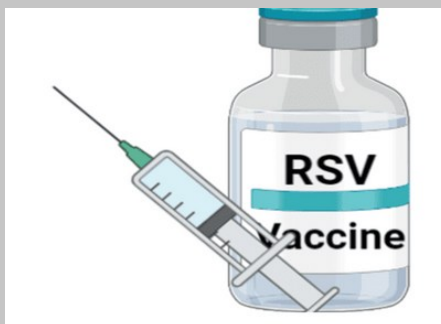
The consequences of fraud are costly. But it doesn't have to be that way. Being informed on Medicare and Medicaid regulations can keep pharmacists, like yourself, safe. We hope that this series of articles has helped you stay informed on federal fraud regulations. Visit the HHS [Office of Inspector General's Website](#) for more information on Medicare and Medicaid Fraud.

References:

1. HHS Office of Inspector General. Fraud & Abuse Laws. Office of Inspector General | Government Oversight | U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Published 2021. <https://oig.hhs.gov/compliance/physician-education/fraud-abuse-laws/>
2. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Exclusion Statute and Civil Monetary Penalties. Asha.org. Published 2023. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.asha.org/practice/reimbursement/exclusion-statute/?srsId=AfmBOopihwRUBPSAb2I5UgQRr3EEu7xslspgn-96dPLLAfhQAar8zeyZ>
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4. Civil Monetary Penalties Law: A Comprehensive Guide to Violations, Penalties, and Prevention in the Healthcare Sector - Simbo AI - Blogs. Simbo AI - Blogs -. Published October 29, 2024. Accessed July 1, 2025. <https://www.simbo.ai/blog/civil-monetary-penalties-law-a-comprehensive-guide-to-violations-penalties-and-prevention-in-the-healthcare-sector-1352304/>

Recent C.A.R.E.S Blog Highlights

“CDC Expands RSV Vaccine Recommendations to Adults 50–59”



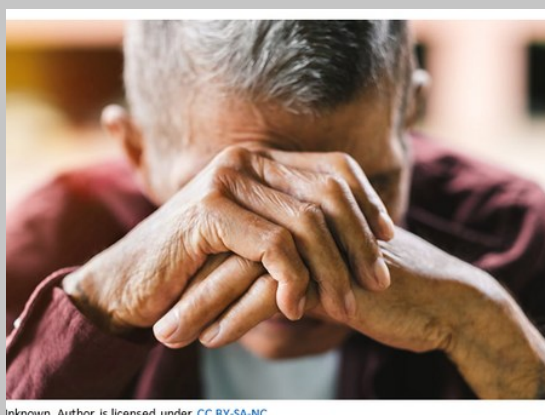
<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/cdc-expands-rsv-vaccine-recommendations-to-adults-50-59>

“A Meal Program Every Alabama Senior Should Know About!”



<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/a-meal-program-every-alabama-senior-should-know-about>

“Standing Against Elder Abuse in Our Communities”

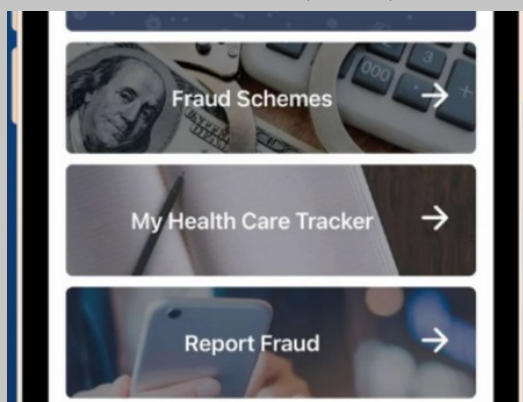


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<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/standing-against-elder-abuse-in-our-communities>

Recent C.A.R.E.S Blog Highlights

“Download the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Medicare Tracker App”



<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/download-the-senior-medicare-patrol-smp-medicare-tracker-app>

“Senior Employment Program for Older Adults”



<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/senior-employment-program-for-older-adults>

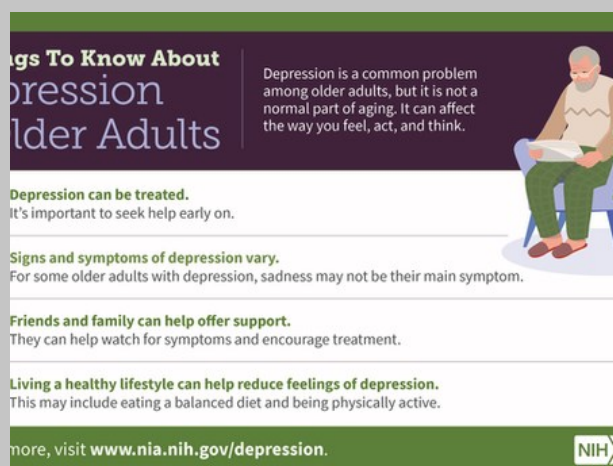
“Medicare Fraud Prevention Week”



<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/medicare-fraud-prevention-week>

Recent C.A.R.E.S Blog Highlights

“Downloadable infographic: depression”



<https://www.alpharmacares.org/post/downloadable-infographic-depression>

“Connecting Caregivers to Care”



<https://www.alpharmacares.org/post/connecting-caregivers-to-care>

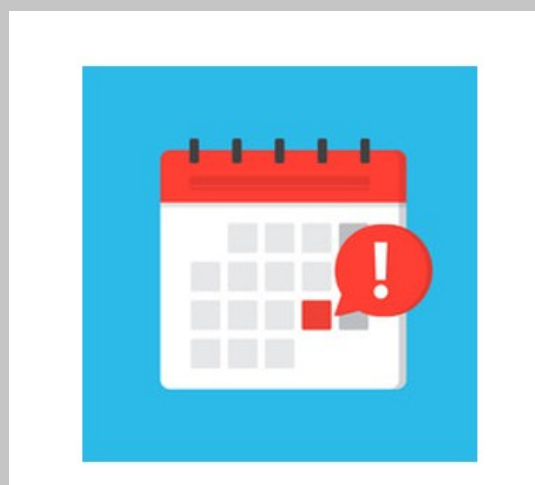
“History in review - First vaccine”



<https://www.alpharmacares.org/post/history-in-review-first->

Recent C.A.R.E.S Blog Highlights

“Don't forget to remind your older and immunocompromised patients about their second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine”



<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/don-t-forget-to-remind-your-older-and-immunocompromised-patients-about-their-second-dose-of-the-covi>

“Are your patients aware of the STEADI Tool for self-assessment of fall risk?”

Check Your Risk for Falling			
Circle "Yes" or "No" for each statement below			Why it matters
Yes (2)	No (0)	I have fallen in the past year.	People who have fallen once are likely to fall again.
Yes (2)	No (0)	I use or have been advised to use a cane or walker to get around safely.	People who have been advised to use a cane or walker may already be more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	Sometimes I feel unsteady when I am walking.	Unsteadiness or needing support while walking are signs of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I steady myself by holding onto furniture when walking at home.	This is also a sign of poor balance.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I am worried about falling.	People who are worried about falling are more likely to fall.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I need to push with my hands to stand up from a chair.	This is a sign of weak leg muscles, a major reason for falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have some trouble stepping up onto a curb.	This is also a sign of weak leg muscles.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often have to rush to the toilet.	Rushing to the bathroom, especially at night, increases your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I have lost some feeling in my feet.	Numbness in your feet can cause stumbles and lead to falls.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine that sometimes makes me feel light-headed or more tired than usual.	Side effects from medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I take medicine to help me sleep or improve my mood.	These medicines can sometimes increase your chance of falling.
Yes (1)	No (0)	I often feel sad or depressed.	Symptoms of depression, such as not feeling well or feeling slowed down, are linked to falls.
Total		Add up the number of points for each "yes" answer. If you scored 4 points or more, you may be at risk for falling. Discuss this brochure with your doctor.	
To check your risk online, visit: www.bit.ly/3e4RfW5		This checklist was developed by the Greater Los Angeles VA Geriatric Research Education Clinical Center and affiliates and is a validated fall risk self-assessment tool (Rubenstein et al. J Safety Res; 2011; 42(6):493-499). Adapted with permission of the authors.	

<https://www.alpharmacycares.org/post/are-your-patients-aware-of-the-steady-tool-for-self-assessment-of-fall-risk>

Did You Know?

Did you know a pharmacist helped make Viagra possible? Louis Ignarro, a pharmacist and pharmacologist, was one of three scientists who won the 1998 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discovering the signaling properties of nitric oxide in the cardiovascular system. This discovery led to the development of Viagra (sildenafil)!



REMINDER!

In partnership with the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), the C.A.R.E.S. program is partnering with the Harrison College of Pharmacy to offer an online **ACPE approved** 3-credit hour video-based training and three **ACPE approved** 1-credit hour articles at no cost to you and your pharmacy technician!

1. Online Video Training:

"The Role of Pharmacy Personnel in Assisting Medicare Beneficiaries with Limited Income and Resources"

In summer 2023, we updated the three hours comprehensive CE program to provide an overview of Medicare, government assistance programs, impact of the Inflation Reduction Act and the roles of the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) with the primary goal of helping pharmacists and pharmacy staff effectively and efficiently assist Medicare beneficiaries.

2. Articles:

Three one-hour home-study articles covering the following topics:

- *Basic Introduction of Medicare: What Pharmacy Personnel Need to Know*
- *Government Assistance Programs to Assist Medicare Patients with Limited Income*
- *Assistance Programs Available for Older Adults*

Access the CE programs by visiting: <https://aub.ethosce.com/>

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Feel free to subscribe to receive Medicare Updates by going to: <https://www.alpharmacycares.org/>