VOLUNTEER RISK – WE AREN’T JUST STUFFING ENVELOPES ANYMORE!

Rebecca Kinney – ACL, SMP Program Manager
SENIOR MEDICARE PATROL: NATIONAL SCOPE
The SMP program:

- Is an education and prevention program aimed at educating Medicare beneficiaries on preventing, identifying, and reporting health care fraud.
- Provides grants to 54 grantees (all states, Puerto Rico, Guam, DC, and U.S. Virgin Islands).
- Oversees a network of more than 5,000 volunteers.
- Provides a direct link from Medicare Beneficiaries to Fraud Investigators.
The SMP Mission

Empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education
SMP Purpose and Structure

- Recruit and train volunteers to conduct outreach and education to seniors and caregivers

- Projects are operated by many varied organizations
  - Examples: SHIP’s, AAA’s, BBB, legal services organizations, SUA, non-profits, etc.
“IT’S NOT THAT WE DON’T TRUST VOLUNTEERS! IT’S THAT THE WORK THEY DO IS SO IMPORTANT THAT WE ABSOLUTELY MUST OVERSEE THAT WORK CLOSELY.”

- LINDA GRAFF
Introduction

- Volunteerism has changed over the last 30 years
  - It is not just stuffing envelopes or working behind the scenes anymore
  - Volunteers are doing important, complex, and sophisticated work
- “Volunteering” increasingly refers to the pay scale, not the nature or importance of the work.
Risks Are Real

- Volunteers are taking on highly skilled tasks:
  - Represent your program to the public
  - Have access to vulnerable people
  - Have access to private, privileged, and confidential information
Vision – SMP VRPM

SMP Volunteer Risk and Program Management Project (VRPM)

To create a volunteer program infrastructure for SMP that promotes safer and more effective volunteer involvement and is more responsive to changing needs.
What We’ve Done So Far

Systematic Risk Management Process

Identify
Evaluate – Sort/Prioritize
Control
Implement
Review
Where We’re At

- Two Main Project Products:
  - Polices
    - 1st Round Implementation completed June 2013
    - Found at: www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/aoa_programs/elder_rights/smp/smppolicies
  - Support and implementation materials
    - Implementation guides
    - Volunteer Program Management manual
    - Sample materials
    - Found at: www.smpresource.org (Resources for SMPs, VRPM Implementation)
The Policies

- Policies
  - Lengthy set (170)

- Note four things:
  - Cover both high risk areas and enhanced volunteer program management
  - Not all are required
  - Developed support and implementation materials
  - Staged roll-out
The Policies

- Three sets of policies that are staged for implementation primarily around the degree of risk they address.
- The more urgent issues are addressed by the first set.
The Policies

Set 1: Risk Management, Screening, Information Technology

- Policies of highest priority
- Include:
  - Conducting a risk assessment
  - Providing safe volunteer worksites
  - Home visits
  - Screening

- Full implementation date: June 2013
The Policies

Set 2: Volunteer Behavior and Standards, and Volunteer Performance Management

- Include:
  - Boundaries and ethics
  - Confidentiality
  - Relationships with beneficiaries
  - Evaluating volunteer performance
  - Taking corrective action
  - Dismissal

- Full Implementation date: December 2013
The Policies

Set 3: Volunteer Program Infrastructure and Management

- Includes:
  - Development of volunteer roles
  - Recruitment of volunteers
  - Orientation and training
  - Supervision of volunteers
  - Retention and recognition

- Full implementation date: December 2014
TOOLS AND RESOURCES
About The Guides

- Policy Implementation Guide
  - Policy by Policy rationale and “how to’s”

- Enactment Guide
  - “Start Here” guide + working with partners

- Topic-specific Guides, for tougher issues
  - Screening
  - Risk Assessment
  - Volunteer “human resources”
About the Sample Tools

- “Off-the-shelf” and customizable
- Designed to comply with VRPM policies
- Examples:
  - Sample Volunteer Handbook
  - Sample Form - Permission to check criminal records
  - Sample Volunteer Application
  - Sample Incident Report Protocol and Form
About the Volunteer Program Management Manual

- Not a policy-oriented guide; a practical handbook
- A “How To” for implementing good volunteer program management practices, relevant for any volunteer program, not just SMP:
  - how to recruit, retain, and recognize volunteers
  - how to prevent volunteer management problems in the first place.
  - How to address problems when they arise
Volunteer Risk and Program Management (VRPM) Policy Implementation

Many resources and tools have been developed to help SMPs implement AoA’s VRPM policies, which come due in three stages from June 2013 through December 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summary List of Policies</td>
<td>At-a-glance list of the policies according to their topic and due date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enactment Guide</td>
<td>Helps SMPs begin the process of implementing the new VRPM policies by providing an overview to the entire process, with an emphasis on working with agency leadership and partner organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Implementation Guide</td>
<td>Provides an overview, rationale, implementation tips, resources, and tools for each policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk Assessment Policy</td>
<td>Provides practical assistance for implementing the policy requiring</td>
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LESSONS LEARNED
Lessons Learned

- Clear communication is vital!
- Don’t rush
- Accommodate variety
- Staff may push back more than volunteers
Getting Buy-In

- From Agency Leadership
- From Staff
- From Partners
- From Volunteers
QUESTIONS?

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