

## Report on Medicare Compliance Volume 30, Number 30. August 23, 2021 News Briefs: August 23, 2021

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By Nina Youngstrom

◆ Blessing Hospital in Quincy, Illinois, has agreed to pay about \$2.82 million to settle false claims allegations in connection with medically unnecessary cardiac catheterization procedures performed by a physician who doesn't practice in central Illinois anymore, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois said Aug. 17.<sup>[1]</sup> The settlement, which stems from the hospital's voluntary self-disclosure, resolves allegations that the hospital was paid the facility portion of cardiac catheterizations performed from Aug. 1, 2012, to Aug. 30, 2018, when the interventional cardiologist implanted medically unnecessary coronary arterial stents. In a statement, the hospital said the physician, who hasn't practiced in the Quincy area for three years, was employed by a non-Blessing medical group. After discovering a possible compliance issue, the hospital did an independent audit. "Once Blessing received the audit findings, it was determined an overpayment had been received for cardiac procedures and the hospital voluntarily contacted the Department of Justice to start the process to refund identified overpayments." The physician is not identified in the settlement.<sup>[2]</sup> "Our patients' health and safety is and has always been our priority," Maureen Kahn, president and CEO of Blessing Health System and Blessing Hospital, said in the statement. "We're proud we did the right thing when we became aware of the issue and we're happy it has been resolved."

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