

Report on Medicare Compliance Volume 32, Number 20. May 22, 2023

Tampa General Hospital Settles CMP Case Over 14 Unlicensed Nurses; 'It's a Tricky Balance'

By Nina Youngstrom

Tampa General Hospital in Florida has agreed to pay \$136,065 in a settlement with the HHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) over 14 unlicensed nurses. The settlement stemmed from the hospital's self-disclosure to OIG.

According to the settlement, which was obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, OIG alleged that Tampa General billed Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE for items or services it knew or should have known were fraudulent. "Specifically, the OIG contends that during the period April 30, 2022 through August 27, 2022, Respondent submitted claims that included services provided by 14 unlicensed nurses identified in Respondent's disclosure," the settlement stated. OIG alleged the conduct subjects the hospital to civil monetary penalties. The hospital was accepted into OIG's Self-Disclosure Protocol (SDP) Jan. 6, 2023. OIG noted that "single damages were calculated as the full salary and benefits paid to the nurses during the period they worked without a valid license."

The hospital didn't admit liability in the settlement. It didn't respond to *RMC*'s repeated requests for comment.

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