
42 U.S. Code § 1320c-2

Contracts with quality improvement organizations

(a) Establishment of geographic areas

The Secretary shall establish throughout the United States such local, State, regional, national, or other geographic areas as the Secretary determines appropriate with respect to which contracts under this part will be made.

(b) Organizations entitled to contract with Secretary

(1) The Secretary shall enter into contracts with one or more quality improvement organizations for each area established under subsection (a) if a qualified organization is available in such area and such organization and the Secretary have negotiated a proposed contract which the Secretary determines will be carried out by such organization in a manner consistent with the efficient and effective administration of this part. In entering into contracts with such qualified organizations, the Secretary shall, to the extent appropriate, seek to ensure that each of the functions described in section 1320c-3(a) of this title are carried out within an area established under subsection (a). If more than one such qualified organization will be operating in an area, the Secretary shall ensure that there is no duplication of the functions carried out by such organizations within the area.

(2)

(A) Prior to November 15, 1984, the Secretary shall not enter into a contract under this part with any entity which is, or is affiliated with (through management, ownership, or common control), an entity (other than a self-insured employer) which directly or indirectly makes payments to any practitioner or provider whose health care services are reviewed by such entity or would be reviewed by such entity if it entered into a contract with the Secretary under this part. For purposes of this paragraph, an entity shall not be considered to be affiliated with another entity which makes payments (directly or indirectly) to any practitioner or provider, by reason of management, ownership, or common control, if the management, ownership, or common control consists only of members of the governing board being affiliated (through management, ownership, or common control) with a health maintenance organization or competitive medical plan which is an “eligible organization” as defined in section 1395mm(b) of this title.

(B) If, after November 14, 1984, the Secretary determines that there is no other entity available for an area with which the Secretary can enter into a contract under this part or the Secretary determines that there is a more qualified entity to perform one or more of the functions in section 1320c-3(a) of this title, the Secretary may then enter into a contract under this part with an entity described in subparagraph (A) for such area if such entity otherwise meets the requirements of this part.

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