

## **Part B Insider (Multispecialty) Coding Alert**

### **Fraud & Abuse: Physicians Pay Millions to Settle Allegations**

Fraud-busters saved Medicare and other federal healthcare programs \$23 billion in 2003, over \$1 billion more than the 2002 total and 117 times the amount spent, the HHS Office of Inspector General reports in its latest semiannual report.

Settlements included \$1.6 million refunded by City of Hope Medical Center and City of Hope Medical Group, which paid up to settle claims that they didn't document physician supervision of care adequately. Also, a Wisconsin pathologist lost his state license after dispensing drugs via the Internet without first examining patients in person.

An internal medicine physician in Texas agreed to repay about \$900,000 to settle claims he billed Medicare for services that weren't provided, weren't necessary, or weren't what he billed for.

Six physicians agreed to pay about \$401,000 to settle charges they wrongly billed for free samples of the cancer drug Lupron. Physicians were also implicated in pharmacy and durable medical equipment fraud.