

OASIS Alert

Fraud & Abuse: 6 TIPS TO PROTECT YOU FROM ROGUE CONSULTANTS

Hint: Don't be fooled by a well-known name.

Use these red flags to screen out consultants likely to do more harm than good:

1. Stay away from consultants who lack experience or who won't provide references, says **Tessa Chenaille** with **Chenaille Compliance Consulting** in Medford, MA.
2. Beware consultants who've developed their own reimbursement strategy and haven't had that strategy "blessed by anyone," warns attorney **Rob Wanerman** with **Epstein Becker & Green** in Washington.
3. Avoid consultants who aren't familiar with health care and don't know much about the regulatory environment in which you work, Wanerman cautions.
4. Steer clear of consultants who blindly follow the crowd. "We're way past the scenario where we can be comfortable saying we can do something because everyone else is doing it," Wanerman stresses.
5. Absolutely avoid any consultant who promises specific results, such as a certain percentage increase in reimbursement, law firm **Foley & Lardner** advises.
6. Don't agree to pay a consultant using a percentage-based fee arrangement, warns Foley & Lardner.

Hidden trap: Many providers will go with a consultant based on the company's good reputation - but well-respected consulting firm **Ernst & Young's** troubles last year as auditor to beleaguered rehab giant **HealthSouth Corp.** proves that this isn't always a safe route, experts point out.

Ernst & Young was sued by shareholders seeking billions of dollars in damages in connection with its audits of HealthSouth and other big companies with accounting troubles.