



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## *Department of Medical Assistance Services*

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November 1, 2024

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** The Honorable Luke E. Torian  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee

The Honorable L. Louise Lucas  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee

**FROM:** Cheryl Roberts  
Director, Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services

**SUBJECT:** Report on Contingency Fee-Based Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs) -  
FY24

This report is submitted in compliance with Item 288.W. of the 2024 Appropriations Act, which states:

*The Department of Medical Assistance Services shall have the authority to pay contingency fee contractors, engaged in cost recovery activities, from the recoveries that are generated by those activities. All recoveries from these contractors shall be deposited to a special fund. After payment of the contingency fee any prior year recoveries shall be transferred to the Virginia Health Care Fund. The Director, Department of Medical Assistance Services, shall report to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees the increase in recoveries associated with this program as well as the areas of audit targeted by contractors by November 1 each year.*

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at 804-664-2660.

CR/wf  
Enclosure

Pc: The Honorable Janet V. Kelly, Secretary of Health and Human Resources

# Annual Report: Contingency Fee-Based Recovery Audit Contractors (RACs) – FY 2024

November 2024

## Report Mandate:

Item 288.W. of the 2024 Appropriation Act states: The Department of Medical Assistance Services shall have the authority to pay contingency fee contractors, engaged in cost recovery activities, from the recoveries that are generated by those activities. All recoveries from these contractors shall be deposited to a special fund. After payment of the contingency fee any prior year recoveries shall be transferred to the Virginia Health Care Fund. The Director, Department of Medical Assistance Services, shall report to the Chairmen of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees the increase in recoveries associated with this program as well as the areas of audit targeted by contractors by November 1 each year.

## Background

Recovery Audit Contractor (RAC) is a term used to describe auditing firms who review medical claims and are paid a contingency fee based on actual recoveries resulting from their audits. Section 6411 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, (PPACA), expanded the RAC program to Medicaid and required states to enter into a contract with a Medicaid RAC. Virginia's 2010 Appropriation Act (Item 297.VVVV.) and all subsequent appropriation acts authorized the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) to employ RAC auditors and pay them a contingency fee based on the recoveries generated by their audit activities.

## Actions Taken to Date

Nationally the Medicaid RAC program has had limited success. RAC contractors in Virginia and other states have a narrow volume of overpayment opportunities that can be identified through data analysis without intensive medical record review. For Virginia Medicaid, the completed migration to 90% managed care in SFY2018 has greatly narrowed the Fee-for-Service claims base to carved-out, state-specific waiver programs. Since the contingency fee on the RAC contract cannot exceed 12 percent of collected overpayments, audits that require medical record review are generally cost-prohibitive for vendors given the limited population served under the Fee-for-Service delivery model.

A successful RAC project will require novel approaches to detect and recover improper payments. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) granted DMAS an exception to the federal requirement to maintain a RAC. In SFY2019, DMAS issued a Request for Information (RFI) to gain industry knowledge. Three vendor responses all confirmed limited success without state structure changes in the program.

Vendors proposed the use of longer look-back periods and the use of extrapolation. Vendors stated a successful RAC vendor would have access to all claim/service types across both Fee-for-Service and Manage Care delivery

systems.

After due consideration, DMAS determined that a RAC auditor is not a fiscally viable option for Virginia Medicaid. In SFY2020, Virginia Medicaid followed fellow states like South Carolina and Vermont, by submitting a state plan amendment (SPA) seeking an exemption to establishing a recovery audit contractor based on our limited claims outside of managed care programs. During SFY2022, CMS granted Virginia Medicaid its second SPA exemption from establishing a recovery audit contractor. This exemption is stated in SPA 22-019 dated August 29, 2022. It expired July 1, 2024. DMAS has submitted a third SPA exemption to CMS from establishing a recovery audit contractor to CMS. Approval is pending.

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## About DMAS and Medicaid

The mission of the Virginia Medicaid agency is to improve the health and well-being of Virginians through access to high-quality health care coverage. The Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) administers Virginia's Medicaid and CHIP programs for approximately two million Virginians. Members have access to primary and specialty health services, inpatient care, dental, behavioral health as well as addiction and recovery treatment services. In addition, Medicaid long-term services and supports enable thousands of Virginians to remain in their homes or to access residential and nursing home care.

Medicaid members historically have included children, pregnant women, parents and caretakers, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. In 2019, Virginia expanded the Medicaid eligibility rules to make health care coverage available to more than 600,000 newly eligible, low-income adults.

Medicaid and CHIP (known in Virginia as Family Access to Medical Insurance Security, or FAMIS) are jointly funded by Virginia and the federal government under Title XIX and Title XXI of the Social Security Act. Virginia generally receives an approximate dollar-for-dollar federal spending match in the Medicaid program. Medicaid expansion qualifies the Commonwealth for a federal funding match of no less than 90% for newly eligible adults, generating cost savings that benefit the overall state budget.