

Troubleshooting Medicare:

Help HAP Identify and Address Issues Affecting Medicare Beneficiaries

FAQs on the Issue Log in SHIPTools

1. Can other Issue Log users see the information I have entered into the Issue Log?

No, information stored in the Issue Log is not accessible to everyone who uses the Issue Log. To protect your privacy and the privacy of the Medicare beneficiaries you serve, the Issue Log has very specific access privileges. This means, for example, that counselors cannot see issues entered by other counselors, even if s/he belong to the same organization (e.g. AAA).

In some cases, access privileges for the Issue Log do allow others to view the data entered. If, for example, a person oversees counseling activities for an organization, such as a SHIP Coordinator, s/he can be granted access to the issues entered by all the counselors in his/her organization. In addition, SHIP Directors have the ability to view issues entered into the Issue Log across their state or territory.

For the purposes of HAP's project on Troubleshooting Medicare, HAP is able to view all issues in the Issue Log to identify potential areas for training and policy recommendations.

2. Is the information entered into the Issue Log secure?

Yes, usernames and passwords restrict access to the Issue Log. Security measures including a firewall, encryption layer, software updates, and virus protection keep the system and data safe from outside threats. In addition, the data contained in the Issue Log uses at least 128 bit encryption via a secure socket layer.

3. Do I need to keep paper copies of my issues in case I want to refer to them or edit them at a later time?

No, all information that you enter into the Issue Log is stored electronically for you to access and edit at any time. When you log into the Issue Log you will see a list of all the issues you have previously entered. You will also be given the option to add a new issue. This ability allows users to track their issues over time.

4. How will HAP use the data in the Issue Log?

HAP will assess the information entered into the log by running reports that aggregate the data in order to identify system-level and population-based trends. Such reports will

allow us to quantify the frequency of an issue, as well as to identify other “characteristics” of an issue, such as where the issue is occurring and which subpopulations of beneficiaries the issue is affecting. By running these reports we will be able to identify potential issues for our training and public education activities.

In addition to looking at data in the aggregate, we may choose to highlight a specific issue or “case” as an illustrative example in our training and public education activities. Underscoring the impact an issue has on the life of a beneficiary is a very compelling way to convey information and help drive positive change. When using illustrative examples as case studies, HAP will strip all identifying characteristics from the information in order to preserve the anonymity of both the counselor and the beneficiary.

5. Who will HAP share data with in the Issue Log?

HAP intends to share the data with two audiences. First, HAP will share aggregate data on the issues to those who are using the Issue Log. We feel it is important for users to get feedback from the field, and to learn about other issues that their peers are encountering. We may also highlight an issue with users as a case study that features what we believe may be a persistent issue. Second, we will be sharing data in the aggregate to decision makers who influence the Medicare program. All data will be stripped of identifying characteristics in order to preserve the anonymity of the counselor and beneficiary.

6. Will HAP contact beneficiaries directly about any issues entered into the Issue Log?

HAP will not contact a beneficiary without obtaining permission from the user who entered the issue into the Issue Log. If there is an issue that HAP would like to gather additional information about, HAP will first contact the user who entered the information and will then follow procedures set forth by the user. For example, a user or counselor may prefer to contact the beneficiary first, in which case HAP will wait to hear from the user on next steps. HAP will follow the lead of the user to respect both the counselor and the beneficiary.