

**INTEGRITY AGREEMENT
BETWEEN THE
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
AND
CHARLES GRAINGER PIERCE, M.D.**

I. PREAMBLE

CHARLES GRAINGER PIERCE, M.D. (“PIERCE”), doing business as a professional association incorporated as CAROLINA PEDIATRICS, P.A. (“CAROLINA PEDIATRICS” or “CP”), hereby enters into this Integrity Agreement (“Agreement”) with the Office of Inspector General (“OIG”) of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) to promote compliance with the statutes, regulations, program requirements, and written directives of Medicare, Medicaid, and all other Federal health care programs (as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 1320a-7b(f)) (“Federal health care program requirements”) by PIERCE. This commitment to promote compliance applies to:

1. PIERCE,
2. CAROLINA PEDIATRICS,
3. Any other entity relating directly or indirectly to the delivery of health care items or services that PIERCE and/or CP (“PIERCE/CP”) owns or in which PIERCE/CP has a controlling interest (as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 1320a-3(a)(3)), and
4. PIERCE/CP’s and any such other entity’s (as defined in Item 3, above) employees, agents, contractors, and third parties employed or engaged by PIERCE/CP or such other entity as a billing or coding consultant; to prepare or submit claims, reports, or other requests for reimbursement for items or services reimbursable by Federal health care programs; and/or with direct or indirect responsibility for the provision, marketing, or documentation of such items or services

(“Covered Persons”). Contemporaneous with this Agreement, PIERCE is entering into a Settlement Agreement with the United States and the State of North Carolina. This Agreement is incorporated by reference into the Settlement Agreement.

II. TERM OF THE AGREEMENT

Except as otherwise provided in this Agreement, the period of compliance obligations assumed by PIERCE under this Agreement shall be three (3) years from the

effective date of this Agreement. The effective date of this Agreement shall be the date on which the final signatory executes this Agreement.

Sections VII, VIII, IX, X, and XI shall expire no later than 120 days from the OIG's receipt of (1) PIERCE's final annual report or (2) any additional materials submitted by PIERCE pursuant to the OIG's request, whichever is later.

III. INTEGRITY OBLIGATIONS

PIERCE hereby agrees to establish a Compliance Program that, at a minimum, includes the following elements:

A. Compliance Contact

Within fifteen (15) days of the effective date of this Agreement, PIERCE shall designate a person to be the Compliance Contact for CAROLINA PEDIATRICS for purposes of developing and implementing policies, procedures, and practices designed to ensure compliance with the obligations herein and with Federal health care program requirements. In addition, the Compliance Contact is responsible for responding to questions and concerns from Covered Persons and the OIG regarding compliance with the Agreement obligations. At all times during the term of this Agreement, there shall be a Compliance Contact who shall have responsibility for ensuring compliance with the obligations in this Agreement. The name and phone number of the Compliance Contact shall be included in the Implementation Report. In the event a new Compliance Contact is designated during the term of this Agreement, PIERCE shall notify the OIG, in writing, within ten (10) days of such a change.

B. Posting of Notice

Within fifteen (15) days of the effective date of this Agreement, PIERCE shall post in a prominent place accessible to all patients and Covered Persons a notice detailing his and CP's commitment to comply with all Federal health care program requirements in the conduct of the medical practice and business and in seeking reimbursement from the Federal health care programs. This notice shall identify a means (*i.e.*, telephone number, address, etc.) through which matters of concern can be reported anonymously. A copy of this notice shall be included in the Implementation Report.

C. Written Policies and Procedures

PIERCE agrees to develop (to the extent such policies and procedures are not already developed), implement, and make available to all Covered Persons written policies and procedures within forty-five (45) days of the effective date of this

Agreement, which written policies and procedures (“Policies and Procedures”) shall address the following:

1. PIERCE/CP’s commitment to operate the medical practice and business in full compliance with all Federal health care program requirements;
2. The proper procedures for the honest and accurate submission of claims in accordance with Federal health care program requirements;
3. The proper documentation of services and billing information and the retention of such information in a readily retrievable form;
4. The requirement that all Covered Persons shall be expected to report to PIERCE or the Compliance Contact suspected violations of any Federal health care program requirements or PIERCE’s own Policies and Procedures. Any Covered Person who makes a good faith inquiry regarding compliance with Federal health care program requirements shall be able to do so without risk of retaliation or other adverse affect;
5. The requirement that PIERCE/CP not hire, employ, or engage as employees or contractors any Ineligible Person. For purposes of this Agreement, an “Ineligible Person” shall be any individual or entity who: (i) is currently excluded, suspended, debarred or otherwise ineligible to participate in the Federal health care programs or in Federal procurement or non-procurement programs; or (ii) has been convicted of a criminal offense related to the provision of health care items or services, but has not yet been excluded, suspended, debarred, or otherwise declared ineligible. To prevent hiring or contracting with any Ineligible Person, PIERCE shall check all prospective employees and contractors prior to engaging their services against the HHS/OIG List of Excluded Individuals/Entities (available through the Internet at <http://www.hhs.gov/oig>) and the General Services Administration’s List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs (available through the Internet at <http://epls.arnet.gov>) and, as appropriate, the state list of exclusions from Medicaid or Medical Assistance programs;
6. The commitment of PIERCE to remain current with all Federal health care program requirements by obtaining and reviewing applicable program memoranda, newsletters, and any other correspondence from the Medicare carrier or Medicaid agency related to Federal health care program requirements;
7. Proper billing and coding procedures for all items and services PIERCE/CP bills or may bill to any Federal health care program, including proper billing and CPT coding for professional services; and

8. The requirement that billed items and services must be medically necessary and appropriate in amount and intensity for the condition(s) of each patient.

At least annually (and more frequently if appropriate), PIERCE shall assess and update as necessary the Policies and Procedures. Within 30 days of the effective date of any revisions, the relevant portions of any such revised Policies and Procedures shall be made available to all individuals whose job functions are related to those Policies and Procedures.

Within 45 days of the effective date of the Agreement and annually thereafter, each Covered Person shall certify in writing that he or she has read, understood, and will abide by PIERCE's Policies and Procedures. New Covered Persons shall review the Policies and Procedures and shall complete the required certification within two weeks after becoming a Covered Person or within 45 days of the effective date of the Agreement, whichever is later.

Copies of the written policies and procedures shall be included in the Implementation Report. Copies of any written policies and procedures that are subsequently revised shall be included in the Annual Report.

D. Training and Certification

Within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this Agreement and at least once each year thereafter, PIERCE and Covered Persons involved in the delivery of patient care items or services and/or in the preparation or submission of claims for reimbursement from any Federal health care program shall receive at least four (4) hours of training from an individual or entity, other than PIERCE or another Covered Person. The training shall be conducted by individuals with expertise in the relevant subject areas, e.g., preparation and/or submission of claims to Federal health care programs for the types of services provided by PIERCE/CP.

Training provided to Covered Persons from October 22, 2001 to the effective date of this Agreement that satisfies the requirements of this Section III.D shall be deemed to meet the initial training requirements of this Section.

New Covered Persons involved in the delivery of patient care items or services and/or in the preparation or submission of claims for reimbursement from any Federal health care program shall receive the training described above within 30 days after becoming a Covered Person or within 60 days of the effective date of this Agreement, whichever is later. The training for New Covered Persons may either be provided internally by Covered Persons who have completed the required annual training or externally by a qualified individual or entity. Until they have received the requisite

training, such New Covered Persons shall work under the direct supervision of a Covered Person who has received the required training.

At a minimum, the annual and new employee training sessions shall cover the following topics:

1. Federal health care program requirements related to the proper submission of accurate bills for services rendered and/or items provided to Federal health care program patients;
2. The written Policies and Procedures developed pursuant to Section III.C., above;
3. All applicable Federal health care program requirements related to reimbursement for the types of services provided by PIERCE/CP, including, but not limited to, requirements related to medical necessity and the selection of appropriate levels of service consistent with each patient's condition;
4. The legal sanctions for improper billing, coding, or documentation or other violations of the Federal health care program requirements;
5. Examples of proper and improper billing, coding, and documentation practices; and
6. Requirements regarding the proper documentation and dating of medical records and patient assessments.

PIERCE and each Covered Person shall annually certify in writing that he or she has received the required training. The certification shall specify the type of training received and the date received. PIERCE shall maintain the certifications, along with the training course materials. The training course materials shall be provided in the Annual Report.

E. Annual Review Procedures

1. *General Description.*

a. Retention of Independent Review Organization. Within 90 days of the effective date of this Agreement, PIERCE shall retain an entity (or entities), such as an accounting, auditing or consulting firm (hereinafter "Independent Review Organization" or "IRO"), to perform reviews to assist PIERCE/CP in assessing and evaluating its billing and coding practices and certain compliance obligations pursuant to this Agreement and the Settlement Agreement. Each IRO retained by PIERCE shall have expertise in the billing, coding,

reporting and other requirements of the particular section of the health care industry pertaining to this Agreement and in the general requirements of the Federal health care program(s) from which PIERCE/CP seeks reimbursement. Each IRO shall assess, along with PIERCE, whether it can perform the IRO review in a professionally independent fashion taking into account any other business relationships or other engagements that may exist. The IRO(s) review shall address and analyze PIERCE/CP's billing and coding to the Federal health care programs ("Claims Review") and, if applicable, shall analyze whether PIERCE/CP sought payment for certain unallowable costs ("Unallowable Cost Review").

b. Frequency of Claims Review. The Claims Review shall be performed annually and shall cover each of the one-year periods of this Agreement beginning with the effective date of this Agreement. The IRO(s) shall perform all components of each annual Claims Review.

c. Frequency of Unallowable Cost Review. If applicable, the Unallowable Cost Review shall be performed by the IRO for the first one-year reporting period beginning with the effective date of this Agreement.

d. Retention of Records. The IRO and PIERCE/CP shall retain and make available to the OIG, upon request, all work papers, supporting documentation, correspondence, and draft reports (those exchanged between the IRO and PIERCE/CP related to the reviews).

2. *Claims Review.* The Claims Review shall include a Discovery Sample and, if necessary, a Full Sample. The applicable definitions, procedures, and reporting requirements are outlined in Appendix A to this Agreement, which is incorporated by reference.

a. Discovery Sample. The IRO shall randomly select and review a sample of 50 Medicaid Paid Claims submitted by or on behalf of PIERCE/CP. The Paid Claims shall be reviewed based on the supporting documentation available at PIERCE/CP or under PIERCE/CP's control and applicable billing and coding regulations and guidance to determine whether the claim submitted was correctly coded, submitted and reimbursed.

i. If the Error Rate (as defined in Appendix A) for the Discovery Sample is less than 5%, no additional sampling is

required, nor is the Systems Review required. (Note: The threshold listed above does not imply that this is an acceptable error rate. Accordingly, PIERCE/CP should, as appropriate, further analyze any errors identified in the Discovery Sample. PIERCE recognizes that the OIG or other HHS component, in its discretion and as authorized by statute, regulation, or other appropriate authority may also analyze or review Paid Claims included, or errors identified, in the Discovery Sample.)

ii. If the Discovery Sample indicates that the Error Rate is 5% or greater, the IRO shall perform a Full Sample and a Systems Review, as described below.

b. Full Sample. If necessary, as determined by procedures set forth in Section III.E.2.a, the IRO shall perform an additional sample of Paid Claims using commonly accepted sampling methods and in accordance with Appendix A. The Full Sample should be designed to (1) estimate the actual Overpayment in the population with a 90% confidence level and with a maximum relative precision of 25% of the point estimate and (2) conform with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' statistical sampling for overpayment estimation guidelines. The Paid Claims shall be reviewed based on supporting documentation available at PIERCE/CP or under PIERCE/CP's control and applicable billing and coding regulations and guidance to determine whether the claim submitted was correctly coded, submitted, and reimbursed. For purposes of calculating the size of the Full Sample, the Discovery Sample may serve as the probe sample, if statistically appropriate. Additionally, PIERCE may use the Items sampled as part of the Discovery Sample, and the corresponding findings for those 50 Items, as part of its Full Sample. The OIG, in its full discretion, may refer the findings of the Full Sample (and any related workpapers) received from PIERCE to the appropriate Federal health care program payor, including the Medicare contractor (e.g., carrier, fiscal intermediary, or DMERC), for appropriate follow-up by that payor.

c. Systems Review. If PIERCE's Discovery Sample identifies an Error Rate of 5% or greater, PIERCE's IRO shall also conduct a Systems Review. Specifically, for each claim in the Discovery Sample and Full Sample that resulted in an Overpayment, the IRO should perform a "walk through" of the system(s) and process(es), that generated the claim to identify any problems or weaknesses that may have resulted in the identified Overpayments. The IRO shall provide to PIERCE observations

and recommendations on suggested improvements to the system(s) and the process(es) that generated the claim.

d. Repayment of Identified Overpayments. In accordance with section III.F.1 of this Agreement, PIERCE agrees to repay within 30 days any Overpayment(s) identified in the Discovery Sample or the Full Sample (if applicable), regardless of the Error Rate, to the appropriate payor and in accordance with payor refund policies. PIERCE/CP agrees to make available to the OIG any and all documentation that reflects the refund of the Overpayment(s) to the payor and the associated documentation.

3. *Claims Review Report*. The IRO shall prepare a report based upon the Claims Review performed (the “Claims Review Report”). Information to be included in the Claims Review Report is detailed in Appendix A.

4. *Unallowable Cost Review*. If applicable, the IRO shall conduct a review of PIERCE/CP’s compliance with the unallowable cost provisions of the Settlement Agreement.

a. The IRO shall determine whether PIERCE/CP has complied with its obligations not to charge to, or otherwise seek payment from, Federal or State payors for unallowable costs (as defined in the Settlement Agreement) and its obligation to identify to applicable Federal or State payors any unallowable costs included in payments previously sought from the United States, or any State Medicaid program. This unallowable cost analysis shall include, but not be limited to, payments sought in any cost reports, cost statements, information reports, or payment requests already submitted by PIERCE/CP or any subsidiaries, and to request, and agree, that such cost reports, cost statements, information reports or payment requests, even if already settled, be adjusted to account for the effect of the inclusion of the unallowable costs. In making this determination, the IRO may need to review cost reports and/or financial statements from the year in which the Settlement Agreement was executed, as well as from previous years.

5. *Unallowable Cost Review Report*. If applicable, the IRO shall prepare a report based upon the Unallowable Cost Review performed. The Unallowable Cost Review Report shall include:

a. the IRO’s findings and supporting rationale regarding the Unallowable Costs Review and whether PIERCE/CP has complied with its obligation not to charge to, or otherwise seek payment from, Federal or State payors for unallowable costs (as defined in the Settlement Agreement) and its

obligation to identify to applicable Federal or State payors any unallowable costs included in payments previously sought from such payor.

6. *Validation Review.* In the event the OIG has reason to believe that: (a) PIERCE's Claims Review or Unallowable Cost Review fails to conform to the requirements of this Agreement; or (b) the IRO's findings or Claims Review results are inaccurate, the OIG may, at its sole discretion, conduct its own review to determine whether the Claims Review or Unallowable Cost Review complied with the requirements of the Agreement and/or the findings or Claims Review results are inaccurate ("Validation Review"). PIERCE agrees to pay for the reasonable cost of any such review performed by the OIG or any of its designated agents so long as it is initiated before one year after PIERCE's final submission (as described in section II) is received by the OIG.

Prior to initiating a Validation Review, the OIG shall notify PIERCE of its intent to do so and provide a written explanation of why the OIG believes such a review is necessary. To resolve any concerns raised by the OIG, PIERCE may request a meeting with the OIG to discuss the results of any Claims Review or Unallowable Cost Review submissions or findings; present any additional or relevant information to clarify the results of the Claims Review or Unallowable Cost Review to correct the inaccuracy of the Claims Review; and/or propose alternatives to the proposed Validation Review. PIERCE/CP agrees to provide any additional information as may be requested by the OIG under this section in an expedited manner. The OIG will attempt in good faith to resolve any Claims Review or Unallowable Cost Review with PIERCE prior to conducting a Validation Review. However, the final determination as to whether or not to proceed with a Validation Review shall be made at the sole discretion of the OIG.

7. *Independence Certification.* The IRO shall include in its report(s) to PIERCE a certification or sworn affidavit that it has evaluated its professional independence with regard to the Claims Review or Unallowable Cost Review and that it has concluded that it was, in fact, independent.

F. Reporting of Overpayments and Material Deficiencies

1. *Overpayments.*

a. Definition of Overpayments. For purposes of this Agreement, an "overpayment" shall mean the amount of money PIERCE/CP has received in excess of the amount due and payable under any Federal health care program requirements. PIERCE/CP may not subtract any underpayments for purposes of determining the amount of relevant "overpayments" for purposes of reporting under this Agreement.

b. Reporting of Overpayments. If, at any time, PIERCE identifies or learns of any overpayments, PIERCE shall notify the payor (e.g., Medicaid program or fiscal intermediary) within 30 days of identification of the overpayment and take remedial steps within 60 days of identification (or such additional time as may be agreed to by the payor) to correct the problem, including preventing the underlying problem and the overpayments from recurring. Also, within 30 days of identification of the overpayment, PIERCE shall repay the overpayment to the appropriate payor to the extent such overpayment has been quantified. If not yet quantified, within 30 days of identification, PIERCE shall notify the payor of his efforts to quantify the overpayment amount along with a schedule of when such work is expected to be completed. Notification and repayment to the contractor should be done in accordance with the contractor policies.

2. *Material Deficiencies.*

a. Definition of Material Deficiency. For purposes of this Agreement, a “Material Deficiency” means anything that involves:

- (i) a substantial overpayment; or
- (ii) a matter that a reasonable person would consider a potential violation of criminal, civil, or administrative laws applicable to any Federal health care program for which penalties or exclusion may be authorized.

A Material Deficiency may be the result of an isolated event or a series of occurrences.

b. Reporting of Material Deficiencies. If PIERCE determines, by any means, that there is a Material Deficiency, PIERCE shall notify OIG, in writing, within thirty days of making the determination that the Material Deficiency exists. The report to the OIG shall include the following information:

- (i) If the Material Deficiency results in an overpayment, the report to the OIG shall be made at the same time as the notification to the payor required in section III.F.1, and shall include all of the information required by the payor, as well as:

- (A) the payor’s name, address, and contact person to whom the overpayment was sent; and

- (B) the date of the check and identification number (or electronic transaction number) on which the overpayment was repaid/refunded;
- (ii) a complete description of the Material Deficiency, including the relevant facts, persons involved, and legal and Federal health care program authorities implicated;
- (iii) a description of PIERCE's actions taken to correct the Material Deficiency; and
- (iv) any further steps PIERCE plans to take to address the Material Deficiency and prevent it from recurring.

G. Notification of Government Investigations or Legal Proceedings

Within 30 days of discovery, PIERCE shall notify OIG, in writing, of any ongoing investigation or legal proceeding conducted or brought by a governmental entity or its agents involving an allegation that PIERCE/CP has committed a crime or has engaged in fraudulent activities. This notification shall include a description of the allegation, the identity of the investigating or prosecuting agency, and the status of such investigation or legal proceeding. PIERCE shall also provide written notice to OIG within 30 days of the resolution of the matter, and shall provide OIG with a description of the findings and/or results of the proceedings, if any.

IV. OIG INSPECTION, AUDIT AND REVIEW RIGHTS

In addition to any other right OIG may have by statute, regulation, contract, or pursuant to this Agreement, OIG or its duly authorized representative(s) may examine or request copies of PIERCE/CP's books, records, and other documents and supporting materials and/or conduct on-site reviews of any of PIERCE/CP's locations for the purpose of verifying and evaluating: (i) PIERCE's compliance with the terms of this Agreement; and (ii) PIERCE's compliance with the requirements of the Federal health care programs in which he participates. The documentation described in this Paragraph shall be made available by PIERCE to OIG or its duly authorized representative(s) at all reasonable times for inspection, audit, or reproduction. Furthermore, for purposes of this provision, OIG or its duly authorized representative(s) may interview any of PIERCE/CP's employees, contractors, or agents who consent to be interviewed at the individual's place of business during normal business hours or at such other place and time as may be mutually agreed upon between the individual and OIG. PIERCE agrees to assist OIG or its duly authorized representative(s) in contacting and arranging for interviews with such individuals upon OIG's request. PIERCE/CP's employees may elect to be interviewed with or without a representative of PIERCE/CP present.

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND ANNUAL REPORTS

A. Implementation Report

Within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Agreement, PIERCE shall submit a written report to OIG summarizing the status of his implementation of the requirements of this Agreement. This report, known as the "Implementation Report," shall include:

1. The name and phone number of PIERCE's Compliance Contact;
2. A copy of the notice PIERCE posted in his office as described in Section III.B and a description of where and when the notice has been posted;
3. A copy of the written policies and procedures required by Section III.C of this Agreement;
4. A certification signed by PIERCE attesting that the Policies and Procedures are being implemented and have been made available to all Covered Persons;
5. A description of the training required by Section III.D., including a summary of the topics covered and a schedule of when the training session(s) were held;
6. A certification signed by PIERCE attesting that all employees have completed the initial training required by Section III.D. and have executed the required certifications;
7. The name and qualifications of the IRO PIERCE has retained to conduct the billing engagement and the proposed start and completion dates of the first annual review;
8. A certification from the IRO regarding its professional independence from PIERCE;
9. A list of all of PIERCE/CP's locations (including locations and mailing addresses), the corresponding name under which each location is doing business, the corresponding phone numbers and fax numbers, each location's provider identification number(s), if any, and the contractor's name and address that issued each provider identification number, if any; and
10. A certification from PIERCE stating that he has reviewed the Implementation Report, has made a reasonable inquiry regarding its content, and believes that, upon such inquiry, the information is accurate and truthful.

B. Annual Reports

PIERCE shall submit to OIG Annual Reports with respect to the status of and findings regarding PIERCE's compliance activities for each of the three one-year periods beginning on the effective date of the Agreement. (The one-year period covered by each Annual Report shall be referred to as the "Reporting Period.") The first Annual Report shall be received by the OIG no later than one year and sixty days after the end of the first Reporting Period. Subsequent Annual Reports shall be received by the OIG no later than the anniversary date of the due date of the first Annual Report.

Each Annual Report shall include:

1. If revisions were made to the written Policies and Procedures developed pursuant to section III.C. of this Agreement, a copy of any Policies and Procedures that were revised;
2. A certification by PIERCE that all Covered Persons have executed the annual Policies and Procedures certification required by section III.C.;
3. A description, schedule, topic outline, and copies of the training materials for the training programs attended in accordance with Section III.D of this Agreement;
4. A certification signed by PIERCE certifying that he is maintaining written certifications from all Covered Persons that they received training pursuant to the requirements set forth in Section III.D of this Agreement.
5. A complete copy of all reports prepared pursuant to the IRO's Billing Engagement, including the Claims Review Report and Process Review Report, along with a copy of the IRO's engagement letter;
6. PIERCE's response and corrective action plan(s) related to any issues raised or recommendations made by the IRO;
7. A summary/description of all engagements between PIERCE/CP and the IRO, including, but not limited to, any outside financial audits, compliance program engagements, or reimbursement consulting;
8. A summary of any Material Deficiencies (as defined in III.F.) identified during the Reporting Period and the status of any

corrective and preventative action relating to all such Material Deficiencies;

9. A summary describing any ongoing investigation or legal proceeding required to have been reported pursuant to Section III.G. The summary shall include a description of the allegation(s), the identity of the investigating or prosecuting agency, and the status of such investigation or legal proceeding;
10. A certification signed by PIERCE certifying that all prospective employees and contractors are being screened against the HHS/OIG List of Excluded Individuals/Entities and the General Services Administration's List of Parties Excluded from Federal Programs; and
11. A certification signed by PIERCE certifying that he has reviewed the Annual Report, has made a reasonable inquiry regarding its content, and believes that, upon such inquiry, the information is accurate and truthful.

VI. NOTIFICATIONS AND SUBMISSION OF REPORTS

Unless otherwise stated subsequent to the execution of this Agreement, all notifications and reports required under the terms of this Agreement shall be submitted to the following:

If to the OIG: Civil Recoveries Branch – Compliance Unit
Office of Counsel to the Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Cohen Building, Room 5527
330 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201
Tele: (202) 619-2078
Fax: (202) 205-0604

If to PIERCE: Charles G. Pierce, M.D.
Carolina Pediatrics, P.A.
201 South Colony Avenue
Ahoskie, NC 27910
Tele: 252-332-5041 or 252-332-5042
Fax: 252-332-6115

Edward E. Hollowell, J.D.
Hollowell, Peacock & Meyer, P.A.
2840 Plaza Place, Suite 300
Raleigh, NC 27612
Tele: (919)783-5657
Fax: (919)787-1833

Unless otherwise specified, all notifications and reports required by this Agreement may be made by certified or registered mail with return receipt requested, overnight mail or delivery service, hand delivery, or other means, provided that there is proof that such notification was received. For purposes of this requirement, internal facsimile confirmation sheets do not constitute proof of receipt.

VII. DOCUMENT AND RECORD RETENTION

PIERCE/CP shall maintain for inspection all documents and records relating to reimbursement from the Federal health care programs, or to compliance with this Agreement, for four years (or longer if otherwise required).

VIII. DISCLOSURES

Consistent with HHS's FOIA procedures, set forth in 45 C.F.R. Part 5, the OIG shall make a reasonable effort to notify PIERCE prior to any release by OIG of information submitted by PIERCE pursuant to his obligations under this Agreement and identified upon submission by PIERCE as trade secrets, or information that is commercial or financial and privileged or confidential, under the FOIA rules. With respect to such releases, PIERCE shall have the rights set forth at 45 C.F.R. § 5.65(d). PIERCE shall refrain from identifying any information as exempt from release if that information does not meet the criteria for exemption from disclosure under FOIA.

IX. BREACH AND DEFAULT PROVISIONS

Full and timely compliance by PIERCE shall be expected throughout the duration of this Agreement with respect to all of the obligations herein agreed to by PIERCE.

A. Stipulated Penalties for Failure to Comply with Certain Obligations

As a contractual remedy, PIERCE and OIG hereby agree that failure to comply with certain obligations set forth in this Agreement may lead to the imposition of the following monetary penalties (hereinafter referred to as "Stipulated Penalties") in accordance with the following provisions.

1. A Stipulated Penalty of \$1,000 (which shall begin to accrue on the day after the date the obligation became due) for each day PIERCE:

- a. Fails to have in place a Compliance Contact as required in section III.A;
- b. Fails to post the notice required in section III.B;
- c. Fails to have in place the Policies and Procedures required in section III.C;
- d. Or each applicable Covered Person fails to attend the training required by section III.D. of the Agreement within the time frames required in that section;
- e. Fails to retain an IRO within the timeframe required in section III.E.1, or annually submit the IRO's Claims Review Report and Process Review Report as required in section III.E and Appendix A; or
- f. Fails to meet any of the deadlines for the submission of the Implementation Report or the Annual Reports to OIG.

2. A Stipulated Penalty of \$750 (which shall begin to accrue on the date the failure to comply began) for each day PIERCE/CP employs or contracts with an Ineligible Person and that person: (i) has responsibility for, or involvement with, PIERCE/CP's business operations related to the Federal health care programs; or (ii) is in a position for which the person's salary or the items or services rendered, ordered, or prescribed by the person are paid in whole or part, directly or indirectly, by Federal health care programs or otherwise with Federal funds (the Stipulated Penalty described in this paragraph shall not be demanded for any time period during which PIERCE can demonstrate that he did not discover the person's exclusion or other ineligibility after making a reasonable inquiry (as described in section III.C.5) as to the status of the person).

3. A Stipulated Penalty of \$750 for each day PIERCE fails to grant access to the information or documentation as required in section IV of this Agreement. (This Stipulated Penalty shall begin to accrue on the date PIERCE fails to grant access.)

4. A Stipulated Penalty of \$750 for each day PIERCE fails to comply fully and adequately with any obligation of this Agreement. In its notice to PIERCE, OIG shall state the specific grounds for its determination that PIERCE has failed to comply fully and adequately with the Agreement obligation(s) at issue and steps PIERCE must take to comply with the Agreement. (This Stipulated Penalty shall begin to accrue 10 days after the date that OIG provides notice to PIERCE of the failure to comply.) A Stipulated

Penalty as described in this paragraph shall not be demanded for any violation for which the OIG has sought a Stipulated Penalty under paragraphs 1-3 of this section.

B. Timely Written Requests for Extensions

PIERCE may, in advance of the due date, submit a timely written request for an extension of time to perform any act or file any notification or report required by this Agreement. Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, if OIG grants the timely written request with respect to an act, notification, or report, Stipulated Penalties for failure to perform the act or file the notification or report shall not begin to accrue until one day after PIERCE fails to meet the revised deadline set by OIG. Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, if OIG denies such a timely written request, Stipulated Penalties for failure to perform the act or file the notification or report shall not begin to accrue until three business days after PIERCE receives OIG's written denial of such request or the original due date, whichever is later. A "timely written request" is defined as a request in writing received by OIG at least five business days prior to the date by which any act is due to be performed or any notification or report is due to be filed.

C. Payment of Stipulated Penalties.

1. *Demand Letter.* Upon a finding that PIERCE has failed to comply with any of the obligations described in section IX.A and after determining that Stipulated Penalties are appropriate, OIG shall notify PIERCE of: (a) PIERCE's failure to comply; and (b) OIG's exercise of its contractual right to demand payment of the Stipulated Penalties (this notification is hereinafter referred to as the "Demand Letter").

2. *Response to Demand Letter.* Within 10 days of the receipt of the Demand Letter, PIERCE shall respond by either: (a) curing the breach to OIG's satisfaction, notifying OIG of his corrective actions, and paying the applicable Stipulated Penalties; or (b) sending in writing to OIG a request for a hearing before an HHS administrative law judge ("ALJ") to dispute OIG's determination of noncompliance, pursuant to the agreed upon provisions set forth below in section IX.E. In the event PIERCE elects to request an ALJ hearing, the Stipulated Penalties shall continue to accrue until PIERCE cures, to OIG's satisfaction, the alleged breach in dispute. Failure to respond to the Demand Letter in one of these two manners within the allowed time period shall be considered a material breach of this Agreement and shall be grounds for exclusion under section IX.D.

3. *Form of Payment.* Payment of the Stipulated Penalties shall be made by certified or cashier's check, payable to: "Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services," and submitted to OIG at the address set forth in section VI.

4. *Independence from Material Breach Determination.* Except as set forth in section IX.D.1.c, these provisions for payment of Stipulated Penalties shall not affect or otherwise set a standard for OIG's decision that PIERCE has materially breached this Agreement, which decision shall be made at OIG's discretion and shall be governed by the provisions in section IX.D, below.

D. Exclusion for Material Breach of this Agreement

1. *Definition of Material Breach.* A material breach of this Agreement means:

- a. a failure by PIERCE to report a Material Deficiency, take corrective action and make the appropriate refunds, as required in section III.F;
- b. a repeated or flagrant violation of the obligations under this Agreement, including, but not limited to, the obligations addressed in section IX.A;
- c. a failure to respond to a Demand Letter concerning the payment of Stipulated Penalties in accordance with section IX.C; or
- d. a failure to retain and use an Independent Review Organization in accordance with section III.E.

2. *Notice of Material Breach and Intent to Exclude.* The parties agree that a material breach of this Agreement by PIERCE constitutes an independent basis for PIERCE/CP's exclusion from participation in the Federal health care programs. Upon a determination by OIG that PIERCE has materially breached this Agreement and that exclusion should be imposed, OIG shall notify PIERCE of: (a) PIERCE's material breach; and (b) OIG's intent to exercise its contractual right to impose exclusion (this notification is hereinafter referred to as the "Notice of Material Breach and Intent to Exclude").

3. *Opportunity to Cure.* PIERCE shall have 30 days from the date of receipt of the Notice of Material Breach and Intent to Exclude to demonstrate to OIG's satisfaction that:

- a. PIERCE is in compliance with the obligations of the Agreement cited by the OIG as being the basis for the material breach;
- b. the alleged material breach has been cured; or

c. the alleged material breach cannot be cured within the 30-day period, but that: (i) PIERCE has begun to take action to cure the material breach; (ii) PIERCE is pursuing such action with due diligence; and (iii) PIERCE has provided to OIG a reasonable timetable for curing the material breach.

4. *Exclusion Letter.* If at the conclusion of the 30-day period, PIERCE fails to satisfy the requirements of section IX.D.3, OIG may exclude PIERCE/CP from participation in the Federal health care programs. OIG will notify PIERCE in writing of its determination to exclude PIERCE/CP (this letter shall be referred to hereinafter as the “Exclusion Letter”). Subject to the Dispute Resolution provisions in section IX.E, below, the exclusion shall go into effect 30 days after the date of the Exclusion Letter. The exclusion shall have national effect and shall also apply to all other Federal procurement and non procurement programs. Reinstatement to program participation is not automatic. If at the end of the period of exclusion, PIERCE wishes to apply for reinstatement, he must submit a written request for reinstatement in accordance with the provisions at 42 C.F.R. §§1001.3001-.3004.

E. Dispute Resolution

1. *Review Rights.* Upon OIG’s delivery to PIERCE of its Demand Letter or of its Exclusion Letter, and as an agreed-upon contractual remedy for the resolution of disputes arising under this Agreement, PIERCE shall be afforded certain review rights comparable to the ones that are provided in 42 U.S.C. § 1320a-7(f) and 42 C.F.R. Part 1005 as if they applied to the Stipulated Penalties or exclusion sought pursuant to this Agreement. Specifically, OIG’s determination to demand payment of Stipulated Penalties or to seek exclusion shall be subject to review by an HHS ALJ and, in the event of an appeal, the HHS Departmental Appeals Board (“DAB”), in a manner consistent with the provisions in 42 C.F.R. §§ 1005.2-1005.21. Notwithstanding the language in 42 C.F.R. § 1005.2(c), the request for a hearing involving Stipulated Penalties shall be made within 10 days of the receipt of the Demand Letter and the request for a hearing involving exclusion shall be made within 25 days of receipt of the Exclusion Letter.

2. *Stipulated Penalties Review.* Notwithstanding any provision of Title 42 of the United States Code or Chapter 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the only issues in a proceeding for Stipulated Penalties under this Agreement shall be: (a) whether PIERCE was in full and timely compliance with the obligations of this Agreement for which OIG demands payment; and (b) the period of noncompliance. PIERCE shall have the burden of proving his full and timely compliance and the steps taken to cure the noncompliance, if any. If the ALJ agrees with OIG with regard to a finding of a breach of this Agreement and orders PIERCE to pay Stipulated Penalties, such Stipulated Penalties shall become due and payable 20 days after the ALJ issues such a decision unless PIERCE requests review of the ALJ decision by the DAB. If the ALJ decision is

properly appealed to the DAB and the DAB upholds the determination of OIG, the Stipulated Penalties shall become due and payable 20 days after the DAB issues its decision.

3. *Exclusion Review.* Notwithstanding any provision of Title 42 of the United States Code or Chapter 42 of the Code of Federal Regulations, the only issues in a proceeding for exclusion based on a material breach of this Agreement shall be:

- a. whether PIERCE was in material breach of this Agreement;
- b. whether such breach was continuing on the date of the Exclusion Letter; and
- c. whether the alleged material breach could not have been cured within the 30-day period, but that:
 - (i) PIERCE had begun to take action to cure the material breach within that period;
 - (ii) PIERCE has pursued and is pursuing such action with due diligence; and
 - (iii) PIERCE provided to OIG within that period a reasonable timetable for curing the material breach and PIERCE has followed the timetable.

For purposes of the exclusion herein, exclusion shall take effect only after an ALJ decision favorable to OIG, or, if the ALJ rules for PIERCE, only after a DAB decision in favor of OIG. PIERCE's election of his contractual right to appeal to the DAB shall not abrogate OIG's authority to exclude PIERCE/CP upon the issuance of an ALJ's decision in favor of OIG. If the ALJ sustains the determination of OIG and determines that exclusion is authorized, such exclusion shall take effect 20 days after the ALJ issues such a decision, notwithstanding that PIERCE may request review of the ALJ decision by the DAB. If the DAB finds in favor of OIG after an ALJ decision adverse to OIG, the exclusion shall take effect 20 days after the DAB decision. PIERCE agrees to waive his right to any notice of such an exclusion if a decision upholding the exclusion is rendered by the ALJ.

4. *Finality of Decision.* The review by an ALJ or DAB provided for above shall not be considered to be an appeal right arising under any statutes or regulations. Consequently, the parties to this Agreement agree that the DAB's decision (or the ALJ's decision if not appealed) shall be considered final for all purposes under this Agreement.

X. NEW ENTITIES OR LOCATIONS

In the event that, on or after the effective date of this Agreement, PIERCE/CP changes locations or purchases or establishes any new business related to the furnishing of items or services that may be reimbursed by Federal health care programs, PIERCE shall notify OIG of this fact as soon as possible, but no later than within thirty (30) days of the date of change of location, purchase or establishment thereof. This notification shall include the location of the new operation(s), phone number, fax number, Federal health care program provider number(s), if any, and the corresponding contractor's name and address that issued each provider number, if any. All Covered Persons at such locations shall be subject to the requirements of this Agreement (e.g., completing certifications and undergoing training).

XI. EFFECTIVE AND BINDING AGREEMENT

Consistent with the provisions in the Settlement Agreement pursuant to which this Agreement is entered and into which this Agreement is incorporated, PIERCE and OIG agree as follows:

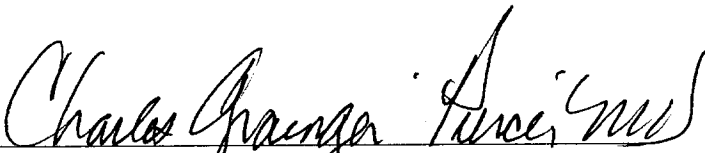
- A. This Agreement shall be binding on the successors, assigns and transferees of PIERCE and CAROLINA PEDIATRICS;
- B. This Agreement shall become final and binding on the date the final signature is obtained on the Agreement;
- C. Any modifications to this Agreement shall be made with the prior written consent of the parties to this Agreement;
- D. OIG may agree to a suspension of PIERCE's obligations under this Agreement in the event of PIERCE/CP's cessation of participation in Federal health care programs. If PIERCE/CP withdraws from participation in Federal health care programs and is relieved from its Agreement obligations by the OIG, PIERCE agrees to notify the OIG 30 days in advance of his intent to reapply as a participating provider or supplier with the Federal health care programs. Upon receipt of such notification, OIG will evaluate whether the Agreement should be reactivated or modified.
- E. The undersigned PIERCE/CP signatories represent and warrant that they are authorized to execute this Agreement. The undersigned OIG signatory represents that he is signing this Agreement in his official capacity and that he is authorized to execute this Agreement.

XII. POTENTIAL GROUNDS FOR MODIFYING THE AGREEMENT

In the event that PIERCE becomes an employee of an entity over which he has no ownership or control interest as defined in 42 U.S.C. § 1320a-3(a)(3), his compensation is set in advance and is not based in any way on his billing, he has no involvement in the billing for services, he no longer practices medicine in a private medical practice, and he is not employed or self-employed in any other health care related occupational activity outside the scope of his employment as an employee of the above-described entity, then, upon PIERCE's notice of same to the OIG, PIERCE and the OIG may modify this Agreement upon mutual written consent. The resulting modified Agreement shall be for a period that is at least equal to the remaining term under this Agreement.

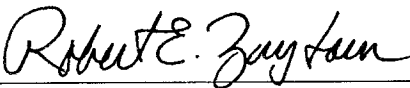
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto affix their signatures:

**FOR: CHARLES GRAINGER PIERCE, M.D.
AND CAROLINA PEDIATRICS, P.A.**



Charles Grainger Pierce, M.D.


May 14, 2002
Date



Robert E. Zaytoun, Esquire
Counsel for Charles Grainger Pierce, M.D.

May 14, 2002
Date

**FOR: OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



Lewis Morris, Esquire
Assistant Inspector General for Legal Affairs
Office of Counsel to the Inspector General
Office of Inspector General
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

5/17/02
Date

APPENDIX A

A. Claims Review.

1. **Definitions.** For the purposes of the Claims Review the following definitions shall be used:

- a. Overpayment: The amount of money PIERCE/CP has received in excess of the amount due and payable under any Federal health care program requirements.
- b. Item: Any discrete unit that can be sampled (e.g., code, line item, beneficiary, patient encounter, etc.).
- c. Paid Claim: A code or line item submitted by PIERCE/CP and for which PIERCE/CP has received reimbursement from the Medicaid program.
- d. Population: All Items for which PIERCE/CP has submitted a code or line item and for which PIERCE/CP has received reimbursement from the Medicaid program (i.e., a Paid Claim) during the 12-month period covered by the Claims Review. To be included in the Population, an Item must have resulted in at least one Paid Claim.
- e. Error Rate: The Error Rate shall be the percentage of net overpayments identified in the sample. The Error Rate is calculated by dividing the net Overpayment identified in the sample by the total dollar amount associated with the Items in the sample.

2. **Other Requirements.**

- a. Paid Claims without Supporting Documentation. For the purpose of appraising Items included in the Claims Review, any Paid Claim for which PIERCE/CP cannot produce documentation sufficient to support the Paid Claim shall be considered an error and the total reimbursement received by PIERCE/CP for such Paid Claim shall be deemed an Overpayment. Replacement sampling for Paid Claims with missing documentation is not permitted.
- b. Use of First Samples Drawn. For the purposes of all samples (Discovery Sample(s) and Full Sample(s)) discussed in this Appendix, the Paid Claims associated with the Items selected in each first sample (or first sample for each strata, if applicable) shall be used. In other words, it is not permissible

to generate more than one list of random samples and then select one for use with the Discovery Sample or Full Sample.

B. Claims Review Report. The following information shall be included in the Claims Review Report for each Discovery Sample and Full Sample (if applicable).

1. Claims Review Methodology.

- a. Sampling Unit. A description of the Item as that term is utilized for the Claims Review. For purposes of this Claims Review, the term “Item” may refer to any discrete unit that can be sampled (e.g., claim, line item, beneficiary, patient encounter, etc.).
- b. Claims Review Population. A description of the Population subject to the Claims Review.
- c. Claims Review Objective. A clear statement of the objective intended to be achieved by the Claims Review.
- d. Sampling Frame: A description of the sampling frame, which is the totality of Items from which the Discovery Sample and, if any, Full Sample has been selected and an explanation of the methodology used to identify the sampling frame. In most circumstances, the sampling frame will be identical to the Population.
- e. Source of Data: A description of the documentation relied upon by the IRO when performing the Claims Review (e.g., medical records, physician orders, certificates of medical necessity, requisition forms, local medical review policies, CMS program memoranda, Medicare carrier or intermediary manual or bulletins, other policies, regulations, or directives).
- f. Review Protocol: A narrative description of how the Claims Review was conducted and what was evaluated.

2. Claims Review Findings.

- a. a description of PIERCE/CP’s billing and coding system(s), including the identification, by position description, of the personnel involved in coding and billing;
- b. the IRO’s findings, supporting rationale, and a summary of such findings and rationale regarding the Claims Review, including the results of the Discovery Sample, and the results of the Full Sample (if any) with the

gross Overpayment amount, the net Overpayment amount, and the corresponding Error Rate(s) related to the net Overpayment. Note: for the purpose of this reporting, any potential cost settlements or other supplemental payments should not be included in the net Overpayment calculation. Rather, only underpayments identified as part of the Discovery Sample or Full Sample (as applicable) shall be included as part of the net Overpayment calculation; and

c. the IRO's findings and recommendations concerning the Systems Review (if any).

3. Statistical Sampling Documentation.

a. The number of Items appraised in the Discovery Sample and, if applicable, in the Full Sample.

b. A copy of the printout of the random numbers generated by the "Random Numbers" function of the statistical sampling software used by the IRO.

c. A copy of the statistical software printout(s) estimating how many Items are to be included in the Full Sample.

d. A description or identification of the statistical sampling software package used to conduct the sampling.

4. Claims Review Results.

a. Total number and percentage of instances in which the IRO determined that the Paid Claims submitted by PIERCE/CP ("Claims Submitted") differed from what should have been the correct claim ("Correct Claim"), regardless of the effect on the payment.

b. Total number and percentage of instances in which the Claim Submitted differed from the Correct Claim and in which such difference resulted in an Overpayment to PIERCE/CP.

c. Total dollar amount of paid Items included in the sample and the net Overpayment associated with the sample.

d. Error Rate in the sample.

e. A spreadsheet of the Claims Review results that includes the following information for each Paid Claim appraised: Federal health care program billed, beneficiary health insurance claim number, date of service, procedure code submitted, procedure code reimbursed, allowed amount reimbursed by payor, correct procedure code (as determined by the IRO), correct allowed amount (as determined by the IRO), dollar difference between allowed amount reimbursed by payor and the correct allowed amount. (See Attachment 1 to this Appendix.)

5. Systems Review. Observations and recommendations on possible improvements to the system(s) and process(es) that generated the Overpayment(s) in the sample Population.

6. Credentials. The names and credentials of the individuals who: (1) designed the statistical sampling procedures and the review methodology utilized for the Claims Review; and (2) performed the Claims Review.

