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### MAC Attorney Tells Physician to Stop Disclosing Lab Payment Data

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By Nina Youngstrom

A California physician on Sept. 18 received a letter from a Medicare administrative contractor (MAC) that ordered him to stop sharing pricing information about labs, which he said he does to draw attention to overpayments.

The cease-and-desist letter from a law firm representing Palmetto GBA told Bruce Quinn, M.D., a former MAC medical director, that the data, which he often obtains through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), is “restricted by intellectual property laws.” The law firm instructed him to delete it and turn over the names of people who downloaded it.

“I don’t think Medicare contractors should send cease-and-desist letters about public documents,” Quinn said. He called it an “inversion” of the normal program integrity and FOIA process. “Palmetto regards CMS FOIA information about overpayments as de facto ‘business secrets’ that I must destroy,” Quinn wrote in an email to CMS officials, including the director of the Medicare Contractor Management Group.

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