

Publications

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Trump Administration Intensifies Federal Benefits Fraud Enforcement with New Task Force

Key Takeaways:

- **Centralized Anti-Fraud Initiative.** A new task force was created to coordinate enforcement across federal benefits programs.
- **Upfront Controls and Oversight.** There will be an increased focus on eligibility verification, pre-payment safeguards and data sharing.
- **Consequences for Inadequate Controls.** There is potential for federal funds to be withheld from states lacking adequate controls.
- **Heightened Enforcement Risk.** The DOJ will focus on False Claims Act enforcement which may drive increased qui tam activity.

On March 16, 2026, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) establishing the Task Force to Eliminate Fraud (Task Force) across federal benefits programs. The Task Force is to lead government-wide efforts to strengthen oversight of programs such as Medicaid, SNAP, housing assistance and other federally funded benefits.

The Task Force will be housed within the Executive Office of the President and chaired by the Vice President, with participation from key agencies including the DOJ, HHS, DHS, Department of the Treasury and others. It is charged with developing and implementing a national strategy to detect, prevent and prosecute fraud, waste, and abuse across federal benefits programs.

Implementation Timeline and Enforcement Priorities

The EO directs agencies to implement a phased approach to strengthening fraud prevention controls. **Within 30 days**, each of the 11 federal agencies participating in the Task Force must identify transactions most susceptible to fraud and propose mitigation measures. **Within 60 days**, the Task Force will develop minimum anti-fraud requirements, including enhanced verification, pre-payment controls, data sharing and provider oversight. **Within 90 days**, the 11 federal agencies must submit implementation plans, while continuing to provide data, support and coordination to the Task Force.

Related People

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Related Capabilities

- Government Investigations

Priorities of the Task Force include:

- Developing measures to improve eligibility verification and strengthen enforcement of federal benefit programs, including evaluating fraud indicators, high-risk vulnerabilities and large-scale or cross-program schemes.
- Establishing pre-disbursement controls to prevent improper payments, including coordination to pause funding where fraud risks are identified.
- Disrupting and dismantling fraud networks and facilitators, and investigating mechanisms of fraud, including potential involvement of government officials.
- Conducting audits and ongoing compliance monitoring, analyzing provider and retailer data to detect fraud, prevent transfers of fraud proceeds and support revalidation or reauthorization efforts.
- Promoting data sharing and coordination across federal, state, local, tribal and territorial governments, including requiring agencies to provide program data to support fraud detection and enforcement.

Looking Ahead: Increased Enforcement and Compliance Risk

The EO directs the DOJ to actively promote whistleblower-driven enforcement under the False Claims Act. Aside from calling for expedited review of these fraud cases, the EO did not specifically address how the DOJ should promote whistleblower cases. But the EO continues the trend of calling for aggressive use of the False Claims Act.

Importantly, the EO directs the Task Force to recommend conditioning or withholding federal funds for noncompliant jurisdictions. That threat has precedent in this administration given that CMS recently deferred approximately \$259.5 million in federal Medicaid funds to Minnesota based on program integrity concerns.

The EO also appears to be coordinated with Congressional oversight activity. On March 3, 2026, the House Energy and Commerce Committee expanded its Medicaid fraud investigation to ten states, including New York and California, by demanding information from states on program integrity, fraud detection and enforcement efforts.

The EO indicates that anti-fraud enforcement levels are likely to remain high for the foreseeable future. Should you have questions regarding the information discussed, please reach out to Kurt Erskine, Jeff Fitzgerald and Gulnara Anzarova, or your preferred Polsinelli attorney.