

(ii) A PRO may provide the information specified in paragraph (a)(1)(i) of this section to the State or Federal licensing body without request.

(2) *Disclosure to State and local public health officials.* A PRO must disclose PRO information to State and local public health officials whenever the PRO determines that the disclosure of the information is necessary to protect against a substantial risk to the public health.

(3) *Disclosure to the courts.* Patient identified records in the possession of a PRO are not subject to subpoena or discovery in a civil action, including an administrative, judicial or arbitration proceeding.

(b) *Exceptions.* (1) The restriction set forth in paragraph (a)(3) of this section does not apply to HHS, including Inspector General, administrative subpoenas issued in the course of audits and investigations of Department programs, in the course of administrative hearings held under the Social Security Act or to disclosures to the General Accounting Office as necessary to carry out its statutory responsibilities.

(2) A PRO must disclose information regarding PRO deliberations and quality review study information only as specified in §§ 476.139(a) and 476.140.

[50 FR 15359, Apr. 17, 1985; 50 FR 41887, Oct. 16, 1985]

§ 476.139 Disclosure of PRO deliberations and decisions.

(a) *PRO deliberations.* (1) A PRO must not disclose its deliberations except to—

(i) HCFA, at the PRO office or at a subcontracted organization;

(ii) HCFA, to the extent that the deliberations are incorporated in sanction and appeals reports; or

(iii) The Office of the Inspector General, and the General Accounting Office as necessary to carry out statutory responsibilities.

(2) PRO deliberations are not disclosable, either in written form or through oral testimony, in connection with the administrative hearing or review of a beneficiary's claim.

(b) *Reasons for PRO decisions.* (1) A PRO may disclose to those who have access to PRO information under other provisions of this subpart, the reasons

for PRO decisions pertaining to that information provided that the opinions or judgements of a particular individual or practitioner cannot be identified.

(2) A PRO must disclose, if requested in connection with the administrative hearing or review of a beneficiary's claim, the reasons for PRO decisions. The PRO must include the detailed facts, findings and conclusions supporting the PRO's determination. The PRO must insure that the opinions or judgements of a particular individual or practitioner cannot be identified through the materials that are disclosed.

§ 476.140 Disclosure of quality review study information.

(a) A PRO must disclose, onsite, quality review study information with identifiers of patients, practitioners or institutions to—

(1) Representatives of authorized licensure, accreditation or certification agencies as is required by the agencies in carrying out functions which are within the jurisdiction of such agencies under state law; to federal and state agencies responsible for identifying risks to the public health when there is substantial risk to the public health; HCFA; or to Federal and State fraud and abuse enforcement agencies;

(2) An institution or practitioner, if the information is limited to health care services furnished by the institution or practitioner; and

(3) A medical review board established under section 1881 of the Act pertaining to end-stage renal disease facilities, if the information is limited to health care services subject to its review.

(b) A PRO must disclose quality review study information with identifiers of patients, practitioners or institutions to the Office of the Inspector General and the General Accounting Office as necessary to carry out statutory responsibilities.

(c) A PRO may disclose information offsite from a particular quality review study to any institution or practitioner involved in that study, provided the disclosed information is limited to that institution or practitioner.