GREAT MINDS AND ONE BALD GUY

FROM INSIGHTS TO IMPACT

Candid Conversations about Tough Topics Facing Independent Agents and Advisors

Season 1: Episode 8

Episode Title: A conversation about fraud, waste and the future of Medicare Supplement category with Sam Melamed

Thank you to our experts who contributed to this conversation:

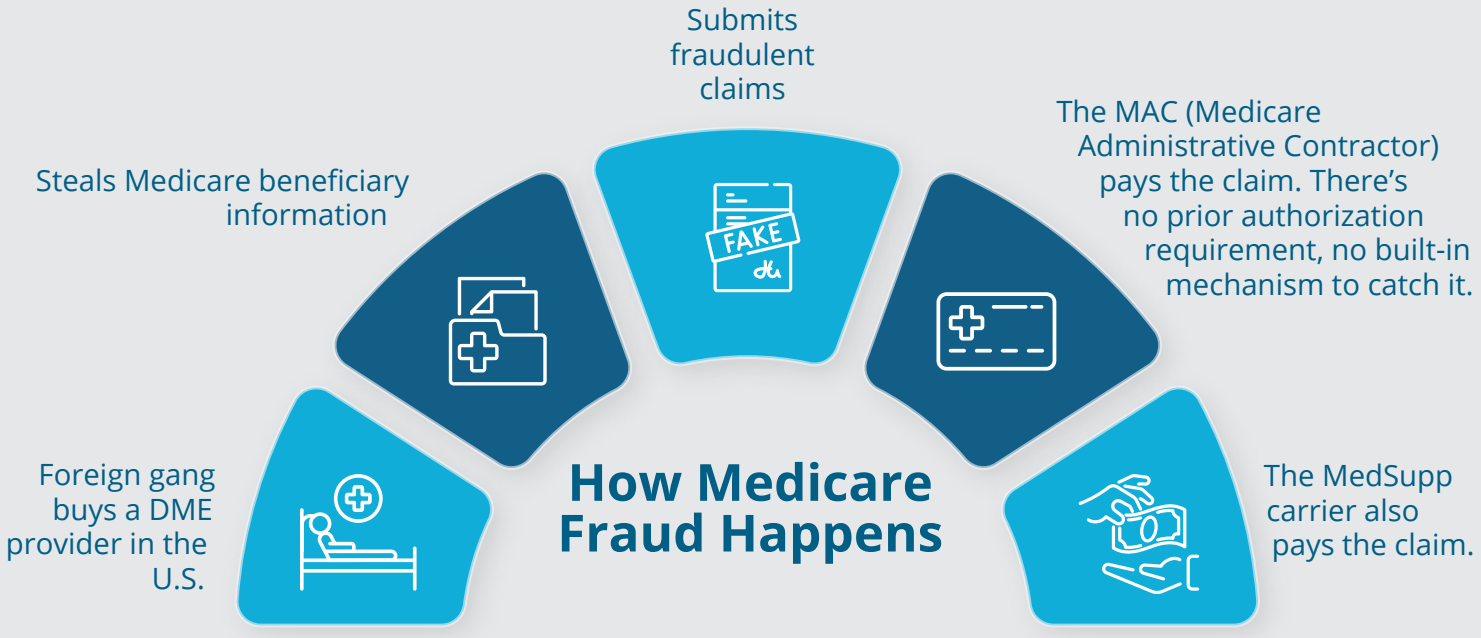
Hosted by: Todd Villeneuve, Managing Partner, IFC National Marketing

On this episode of Great Minds and One Bald Guy, our host Todd Villeneuve talks with Sam Melamed, Chief Executive Officer at NCD about changing the dynamic of fraud and waste in Medicare and in the insurance industry.

Sam Melamed, Chief Executive Officer, NCD

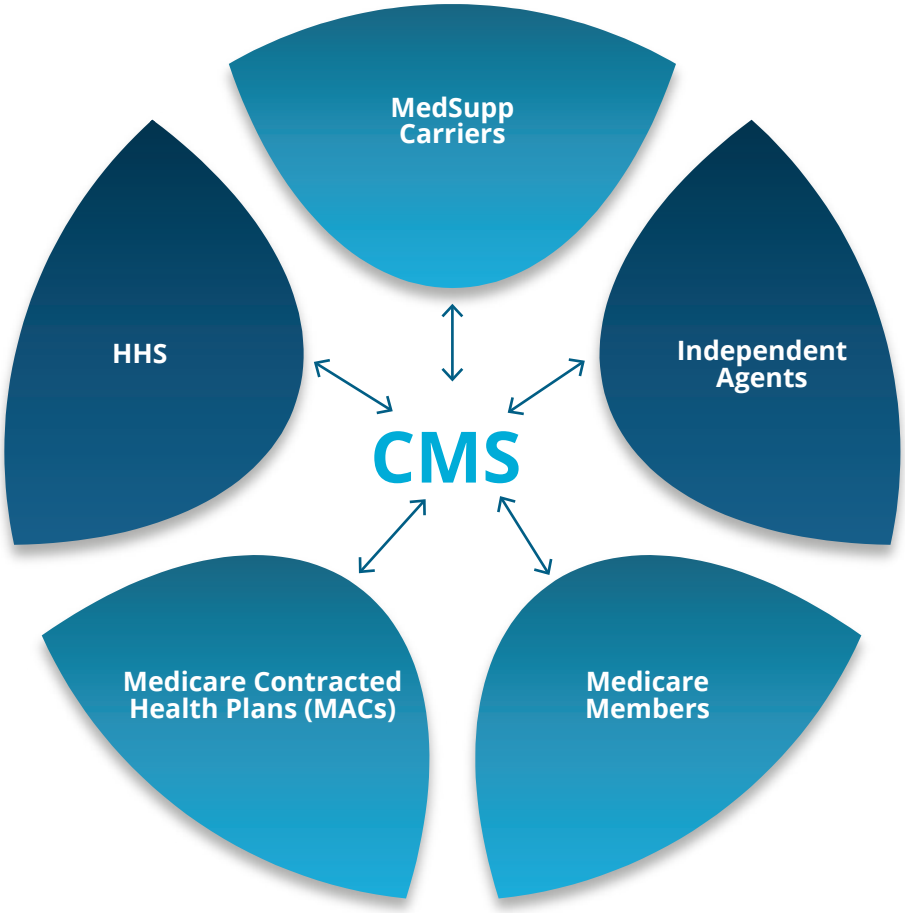
Nerding Out About Insurance

As founder of Insurance Forums, the world's largest insurance community, Sam has worked with more than 120 insurance carriers, FMOs, distributors, and industry technology providers to grow their brands, expand market share, and develop product portfolios. He brings deep expertise in the Affordable Care Act, Medicare, and group benefits, and is active in the Young President's Organization (YPO), where he served as former Baltimore/DC Chapter Chair and network vice chair.



What Needs to Happen

To prevent ongoing Medicare fraud, all stakeholders and entities involved in this healthcare experience must be empowered to participate in a bidirectional flow of information about suspicious activities. Mechanisms need to be created to support this free flow of information between all parties.



What Agents Can Do

Agents can take a few meaningful actions:

Educate clients.

Encourage members to report suspicious EOBs to CMS or the HHS Office of the Inspector General. Tips like these can make a real difference.

Ask carriers the right questions.

When choosing which carriers to represent, don't just look at who has the lowest rate. Ask how seriously they're taking fraud prevention — carriers who are proactive will have more stable rates over time.

Tell the story when explaining rate increases.

Fraud, waste, and rising underlying costs are real contributors. Being able to reference something like Operation Gold Rush–a major DOJ fraud enforcement action–gives agents credibility and context.

NCD's Philosophy and the Level for Life Commission Model

One of NCD's core beliefs is in the Level for Life commission model, because it truly aligns the interests of the carrier, the agent, and the member. When an agent earns a large first-year commission that drops off significantly afterward, their incentives aren't fully aligned with long-term client outcomes. The goal of this model is for the agent to trust NCD with their customer, and for that to become a shared customer. The traditional MedSupp commission model was built around the financial reality that MedSupp carriers tend to make their profit in the out-years. But it doesn't fundamentally align all parties. Every year for the past five years, MedSupp loss ratios have increased. None of the carriers in the MedSupp space are doing great financially on that.

We think the move toward more level-for-life commission structures is not only more sustainable, it's better for everyone. In a level-for-life commission structure,the carrier gets more stability and keeps healthier people in the risk pool. The agent builds a more predictable book of business. And the member gets a more consistent experience.

For standalone supplemental products, the timing is particularly good. Last year saw a significant pullback in embedded dental and vision benefits inside Medicare Advantage plans, and that's expected to continue. Meanwhile, we estimate that the percentage of MedSupp members who have ever even been presented with a standalone dental option is under 20%. That means there's potential to grow the addressable market fivefold just by having more agents understand where these products genuinely fit.

> "NCD provides dental, vision, and accident coverage for National Wellness and Fitness Association members. We pride ourselves on being the highest-rated insurance plan administrator in the country, and we manage our team with love and kindness to treat customers in a way that sets the standard for the industry. Our goal is for the agent to trust us with their customer, and for that to become a shared customer. And if we deliver world-class service, everyone wins."
>
> **— Sam Melamed, Chief Executive Officer, NCB**

Follow with Sam Melamed on LinkedIn for regular analysis on healthcare policy, Medicare market trends, and regulatory developments.

Connect with Sam Melamed
LinkedIn

Watch Season: Episode 8
Click to watch

See what's in the Bald Guy's Briefcase
Click to view

©2026 IFC National Marketing.
All Rights Reserved