

# An Overlooked Opportunity

FOR CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS

Making the Most of Your Hospital's Marketing Investment



## THE ROLE OF MARKETING IN CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS

Critical Access Hospitals are constantly balancing priorities; patient care, staffing, operations, and community outreach. Marketing plays an important role in that mix:

- Educate their communities
- Share important health information
- Stay visible and accessible to patients

Marketing today isn't about promotion, it's about communication. Certain types of educational and community-focused marketing can align with allowable cost reporting guidelines, when structured appropriately.

## WHY THIS MATTERS

This isn't always widely discussed, and many teams simply haven't been exposed to it as part of their process. For hospitals that take the time to understand this, it can create an opportunity to:

- Maximize the value of existing efforts
- Strengthen community outreach
- Improve overall financial efficiency

## WHERE TO START

For hospitals interested in learning more, a good first step is simply to ask:

- Are we creating educational, community-focused messaging?
- How are our marketing efforts currently categorized or reported?
- Is there an opportunity to better align these efforts?

Marketing teams are already doing important work; educating patients, supporting providers, and strengthening community connections. This is simply about understanding the full value of that work.

## QUICK TAKEAWAYS

If you're thinking about how your current marketing fits into this space, here are helpful ways to look at it:

**1 Focus on Educational, Informative Messaging**  
Content that explains conditions and health topics can be especially valuable to your community.

**2 Use Neutral, Non-Promotional Language**  
This type of messaging informs rather than persuades. Examples:

*"Heart disease accounts for about 1 in 5 deaths in the United States."*

*"Strength and balance support stability as we age. With 1 in 4 adults over 65 experiencing falls each year, understanding risks is important."*

*"Symptoms of influenza may include fever, cough, body aches, and fatigue. Older adults and those with underlying conditions may be at higher risk for severe illness."*

*"Nearly half of U.S. adults have high blood pressure, and many don't know it. Regular check-ups can help detect potential health concerns early."*

**3 Think in Terms of Community Benefit**  
Educational campaigns support public health awareness, not just service promotion.

**4 Recognize the Added Value**  
When structured appropriately, you may be able to get reimbursed for marketing dollars spent.

***Sometimes the biggest opportunities aren't about doing more, they're about seeing what's already there in a new way. Your marketing may be doing more for your hospital than you realize.***

*If your hospital hasn't explored this area before, you're not alone. It's a conversation many organizations are just beginning to have, and one that can be very helpful to understand.*

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