

## **“Before” and “After” Plain Writing Examples**

### **Example: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Fraud Letter**

The Medicare Beneficiary Services receives many letters on Medicare fraud every year. To reach their customers more effectively, they took an already short letter and made it even shorter and to the point.

#### **Before**

Investigators at the contractor will review the facts in your case and decide the most appropriate course of action. The first step taken with most Medicare health care providers is to reeducate them about Medicare regulations and policies. If the practice continues, the contractor may conduct special audits of the provider’s medical records. Often, the contractor recovers overpayments to health care providers this way. If there is sufficient evidence to show that the provider is consistently violating Medicare policies, the contractor will document the violations and ask the Office of the Inspector General to prosecute the case. This can lead to expulsion from the Medicare program, civil monetary penalties, and imprisonment.

#### **After**

We will take two steps to look at this matter:

- We will find out if it was an error or fraud.
- We will let you know the result.

### **Example: Health Resources and Services Administration, Handbook: Assuring Access to Essential Health Care**

The revised publication *Assuring Access to Essential Health Care* replaces *Profile 1996*. The name, alone, is a significant improvement for the readers, and makes it more likely they will read it. The rewritten publication eliminates irrelevant information and includes illustrations and pictures of professionals and services.

#### **Before**

Title I of the CARE Act creates a program of formula and supplemental competitive grants to help metropolitan areas with 2,000 or more reported AIDS cases meet emergency care needs of low-income HIV patients. Title II of the Ryan White Act provides formula grants to States and territories for operation of HIV service consortia in the localities most affected by the epidemic, provision of home and community-based care, continuation of insurance coverage for persons with HIV infection, and treatments that prolong life and prevent serious deterioration of health. Up to 10 percent of the funds for this program can be used to support Special Projects of National Significance.

**After**

Low income people living with HIV/AIDS gain, literally, years, through the advanced drug treatments and ongoing care supported by HRSA's Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act.

**Example: Public Health Service Brochure, Losing Weight Safely**

The Department of Health and Human Services revised a six page article with a single, fold-out brochure, conveying the same information. Below is an excerpt.

**Before**

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a half hour or more of moderate physical activity on most days, preferably every day. The activity can include brisk walking, calisthenics, home care, gardening, moderate sports exercise, and dancing.

**After**

Do at least 30 minutes of exercise, like brisk walking, most days of the week.

**Example: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Open Door Initiative****Before**

The Open Door Initiative is a program based on a simple and fresh attitude: that the CMS desires to better hear and interact with those beneficiaries, providers, and other stakeholders interested in the delivery of quality healthcare for our nation's seniors and beneficiaries with disabilities. This increased emphasis on responsiveness is captured through an ongoing series of 'Open Door Forums' that provide a dialogue about both the many individual service areas and beneficiary needs within CMS.

**After**

We want to hear from you! Help us improve our service to you. Attend an Open Door forum near you. For information about upcoming forums, visit <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/opendoor/schedule.asp>

**Example: National Institutes of Health, Visualizing Transcription of Genes in Living Cells****Before**

Visualizing Transcription of Genes in Living Cells: Scientists have developed reagents coupled with microscopic technology to visualize individual genes being transcribed in real-time in living cells. Transcription mechanisms have largely been determined from test tube experiments and large scale genome-wide analyses. This technology uses fluorescently tagged genes, which generate

fluorescent proteins and tracks their active transcription using multi-photon fluorescence microscopy. Eventually, refinements of the technology should enable researchers to watch individual genes being transcribed in many types of cells, including those from humans, which may provide more insight in the mechanisms of how transcription occurs.

### **After**

Watch Genes Turn On in Living Cells: Most genes serve one main purpose: as recipes for the body's proteins. The first step in activating genes to produce proteins is called transcription. Although scientists think they know how transcription works, it has not been well studied in real-time in living cells. Now, researchers have developed fluorescent dyes and new techniques in microscopy that will enable them to watch transcription from individual genes. Faulty gene transcription can lead to cancer, so a detailed understanding of the process may lead to new ways to treat disease.

### **Example: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicaid eligibility**

#### **Before**

Apply if you are aged (65 years old or older), blind, or disabled and have low income and few resources. Apply if you are terminally ill and want to receive hospice services. Apply if you are aged, blind, or disabled; live in a nursing home; and have low income and limited resources. Apply if you are aged, blind, or disabled and need nursing home care, but can stay at home with special community care services. Apply if you are eligible for Medicare and have low income and limited resources.

#### **After**

You may apply for Medicaid if you are:

- Terminally ill and want hospice services;
- Eligible for Medicare and have low income and limited resources; or
- 65 years old or older, blind, or disabled and have low income and few resources and
  - Live in a nursing home; or
  - Need a nursing home care but can stay at home with special community care services