

Experts Get Practical With Privacy Rule

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Is your healthcare organization working toward compliance with the HIPAA final privacy rule, or are you procrastinating in hopes that the rule will be changed because the regulation is too costly and burdensome?

Experts say they don't expect HIPAA, and in particular the new privacy regulations, to go away or be delayed. What can healthcare organizations do to ensure they're in substantial compliance with the new regulations?

One way to tackle this formidable task is to turn to AHIMA. In an effort to make implementation a reality and provide a smoother transition for healthcare organizations, AHIMA created "Getting Practical with Privacy." These two-day seminars take practical advice and logical steps for implementation on the road to 14 locations throughout the country.

Many existing seminars for HIPAA implementation are theory-based, guiding attendees through a complex maze of legalese, but not offering the kind of down-to-earth advice those in the healthcare industry need to implement the legislation. AHIMA president Barbara Fuller, JD, RHIA, says AHIMA's approach is designed to offer less theory and more practical advice, guiding members and others in the healthcare industry through the minefield of ensuring timely and correct HIPAA privacy implementation.

"We hope to address most, if not all, of the very practical implementation problems," Fuller says. "These seminars will offer attendees a very practical, hands-on opportunity to learn the intricacies of the privacy rule and explore tips on implementation of the privacy rule in their work settings."

Michelle Dougherty, RHIA, HIM practice manager at AHIMA, adds, "Our members should be leaders on the privacy issue. These seminars are meant to get the training out to the membership and provide them with the expertise they need to take a leadership role in their organization."

The seminar team, comprised of HIPAA experts Jill Callahan-Dennis, JD, RHIA, Harry Rhodes, MBA, RHIA, Gwen Hughes, RHIA, and Dougherty, have followed HIPAA since before its inception and are well-versed in the ins and outs of the complex regulations.

"We won't be proposing any pie-in-the-sky solutions. Instead, our guidance will be grounded, practical, and results oriented. Members are looking for a plan of action," says Rhodes. "They want to know what the steps in the implementation process should be. They want to know where they should begin and what their goals should be. The faculty addresses all of these issues. We'll give factual information and sound advice on how to best implement HIPAA. Our faculty has taken everything that they know on the subject and packaged it into easy to understand sessions."

"Getting Practical with Privacy"-scheduled to kick off on October 18 in Miami Beach, FL, and continue nationwide into 2002-focuses on the individual mandates, looking at each from an operations perspective. Practical solutions will be presented on issues such as consent and authorization, management of protected health information, business associate agreements, preemption and state laws, positioning privacy officers, risk assessment, training, and more. Attendees will come away from the program with solid tools for implementation and a much clearer understanding of the rules and how they influence their organizations.

The seminar costs \$185 for members (\$225 for nonmembers) with discounts for students and groups and is sponsored in part by the Southern Medical Association and the following health information management associations: Arizona, California, Colorado, the Chicago area, Illinois, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington. For complete details on "Getting Practical with Privacy," visit www.ahima.org/privacy.

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