

Guarding Against Disclosure

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The Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) is developing "guiding national principles" for assisting institutional review boards (IRB) and similar bodies to protect against the wrongful disclosure of personal health information that could be used to identify patients involved in research. The principles will be based on a study by the Institute of Medicine and the National Academy of Sciences. The study is expected to be completed in summer 2000. AHCPR expects that the recommendations provided for IRBs and the applicable researchers also will provide guidance to for-profit and other organizations that use patient databases for marketing research, health benefits management, quality assurance, and additional analytical purposes.

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