



CMS Reminds Practices of the Importance of HIPAA Compliance

The March 2, 2017 Medicare Learning Network publication *MLNConnects*, which reports official news from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), contained a notification to Covered Entities reminding them that they must stay up-to-date on applicable HIPAA rules. More frequent announcements regarding settlements for HIPAA violations, larger settlements levied against smaller covered entities, and the increase in required breach reporting events indicate that HIPAA enforcement is taken seriously by the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Every HIPAA entity should be aware of HIPAA rules, how the rules apply to their practice, and the enforcement of those rules.

The *MLNConnects* announcement referred Covered Entities to a previous CMS notification of the HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Notification Rules, which protect the privacy and security of health information and provide individuals with certain rights to their health information.

This publication discusses in greater detail:

- **Covered Entities**, which include most health care professionals and health care organizations, as well as their business associates.
- **The Privacy Rule**, which sets national standards for when protected health information (PHI) may be used and disclosed;
- **The Security Rule**, which specifies safeguards that covered entities and their business associates must implement to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic protected health information (ePHI);
- **The Breach Notification Rule**, which requires covered entities to notify affected individuals, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS), and in some cases, the media of a breach of unsecured PHI.

Also included are links to significant HIPAA Privacy, Security, and Breach Notification Resources.

Please access this important CMS publication at:

<https://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/Downloads/HIPAAPrivacyandSecurityTextOnly.pdf>

The Brown Edwards Medical Practice Services Team is here to help! Give us a call to see how we can support your practice with management, review, planning, and compliance assistance tailored to the specific needs of your practice! You can reach members of the Brown Edwards Medical Practice Services team at (276) 466-5248 or (304) 325-8157.

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