



HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)

Keeping Clients Ahead of Regulatory Changes and Case Law Implementation

SITUATION

The Administrative Simplification provisions of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) required virtually all health care providers to adopt new policies and procedures to protect the confidentiality and security of the medical information they hold. A new and complex act with often confusing privacy and security components, HIPAA has been a source of frustration for many health care providers since it was enacted. Health care providers needed clear, reliable guidance for changing their practices to comply with HIPAA, without disrupting their existing business or the quality of care to their patients.

CHALLENGE

- Guiding clients to determine how HIPAA affects the way they conduct their everyday practices.
- Identifying the steps necessary to become—and remain—compliant, and implementing strategies that are unique to each client to achieve best practices.
- Making necessary changes to keep the health care providers in compliance with the law, without upsetting their existing business practices or interrupting the quality of care they provide to their patients.

SOLUTION

What works well for one health care provider may not be the best practice for another. Knowing the providers and their businesses, and having unique and extensive insight into HIPAA compliance, enables the Mackenzie Hughes health lawyers to counsel their clients in developing HIPAA policies and procedures that are specially suited to them. The privacy and security provisions of HIPAA are still in their infancy, therefore, it is crucial for Mackenzie Hughes health lawyers to stay on top of current law changes, issuance of new guidance, and the development of case law to best serve each client individually.

SUCCESS

Mackenzie Hughes has successfully guided many of the region's largest and most prominent health care providers in the region through their learning, and implementation, of practical, workable HIPAA privacy and security policies and procedures that fit neatly within their existing practices while meeting the standards set forth in the complex regulations. A year after its mandatory compliance date of April 2003, many health care organizations are now using Mackenzie Hughes' health care team to re-evaluate and revise their procedures relating to HIPAA's privacy rules. HIPAA security is the next "hot" issue for health care entities, with a compliance date of April 2005. Based upon its insight and successful track record, Mackenzie Hughes is once again ready to lead the pack in counseling health care providers through their compliance of these new rules, in a manner that is least disruptive to their existing practices.

