

PREFACE

Now that most of the various compliance deadlines for the HIPAA regulations have passed, providers have the appropriate policies and procedures in place, employees have been trained, and there is a level of comfort with the basic privacy and security concepts under HIPAA. However, providers are facing new and complex situations requiring an even more in-depth understanding of the intricacies of these complicated regulations. This book has been written to impart practical advice for maintaining the privacy and security of medical information as providers move beyond the basic HIPAA compliance issues.

Beyond the Basics was developed to be a resource for anyone facing Privacy Rule and Security Rule compliance including physicians, risk managers, office staff and medical records staff. The articles are written not only for covered entities, but also for those providers not technically required to comply with HIPAA, as the regulations may create a floor of confidentiality and security expectations that all providers may be expected to meet or exceed.

The articles appearing in this book were originally published in our quarterly risk management newsletter *Rx for Risk* between 2001 and 2005. The first seven chapters explore specific HIPAA issues with the most current article listed first within each chapter. Articles range from short checklists to in-depth analysis of specific issues raised in the context of HIPAA compliance. A comprehensive appendix reviews the basic concepts under HIPAA and serves as a “quick primer reference.” *Beyond the Basics* can be read in its entirety or used as a quick reference. A detailed subject matter index has been developed to help readers navigate particular topics of interest.

What follows is not legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Rather, consider it a general guide in the determination and development of your practice’s HIPAA compliance strategy, along with risk management discussions of approaches to specific issues we’ve seen faced by providers. Due to the complexity of compliance issues, you may still need to seek additional advice from your attorney. Furthermore, due to regulatory activity, some of the information, particularly in the appendix, may have been or will be modified. The topic of HIPAA is evolving with new regulations and resources being created; it is suggested that providers monitor the HHS websites [www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa (for the Privacy Rule) and www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2/default.asp (for all other HIPAA regulations)] as well as PRMS, Inc.’s website, www.prms.com for the latest HIPAA information.