

# NEWS

## Association for Healthcare Philanthropy

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### **AHP Seeks to Eliminate HHS Language Which Blocks Fundraising**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**, (February 14, 2000) – The Association For Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP) today sent the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) its comments regarding changes to the standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information.

In a letter to HHS' Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, AHP President and CEO William C. McGinly said "AHP respectfully requests that the proposed regulations be amended so that they neither block nor reduce our members ability to raise funds for not-for-profit public health care programs." Specifically, he said that in paragraph 5 of the standards, AHP would have the fundraising activities of not-for-profit health care providers included under "health care operations" that do not require individual authorization.

McGinly said AHP has as its core mission the advancement of philanthropy for health care and the concern and well-being of patients. He said AHP members are "sworn to respect the confidentiality of patient information through the AHP' Statement of Professional Standards and Conduct and its companion Bill of Donor Rights."

McGinly explained that to not amend the rules would restrict AHP members' access to patient databases and contributions of grateful patients, a major funding source for health care. He estimated that the language now proposed by HHS would have cost public health care programs upwards of \$3.5 billion in FY 1998.

HHS' proposed standards seek a clear and consistent set of privacy standards which would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the health care system. The agency is receiving public comment until February 17, 2000.

Other AHP'suggested changes include:

**Applicability** -- AHP endorses the applicability of the privacy standards to the entities that include the health care providers that employ AHP members, but urges HHS to make philanthropic programs a permissible use of individually identifiable health information, without authorization, as part of the providers "health care operation";

**Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations** -- AHP opposes the proposed requirement that advanced authorization is needed for marketing of health services, marketing by a non-health

related division of the same corporation, and fundraising. AHP would have these activities stricken from the language;

Business Partner -- AHP supports HHS' definition, provided it relates to the ways health care philanthropy programs are structured and does not limit such programs' ability to raise money from grateful patients.

The full text of AHP's remarks to HHS are available in the Government Relations of the AHP website section or by telephoning (703) 532-6243. AHP, established in 1967, is a not-for-profit organization whose 2,850 members manage philanthropic programs in 1,700 of the nation's 3,400 not-for-profit health care providers. AHP members raised more than \$5.7 billion in FY 1998.

AHP, established in 1967, is a not-for-profit organization whose 3,100 members manage philanthropic programs in 1,900 of the nation's 3,400 not-for-profit health care providers. AHP members raised more than \$7 billion in FY 2000.



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