



Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans

May 13, 2003

Hospital Administrators
Hospital Cancer Registrars
Pathology Laboratory Directors
Cancer Diagnostic and Treatment Centers
Surgery Centers
Physicians and Dentists

Re: HIPAA and Minnesota's Cancer Reporting Requirements

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to assist your institution or medical practice in complying with the requirements of the HIPAA Privacy Rule as they relate to your institution's or medical practice's reporting of information about cases of cancer to the Minnesota Cancer Surveillance System.

The Privacy Rule (45 CFR part 164) permits covered entities to disclose protected health information without the written authorization of the individual "to the extent that the disclosure is required by law and the disclosure complies with and is limited to the relevant requirements of such law" [45 CFR section 164.512(a)(1)]. Your institution is required by Minnesota law to report cases of cancer to the Minnesota Department of Health (See Minnesota Statutes Section 144.68). In addition, Minnesota Rules Chapter 4606 specifies the information required to be reported by your institution. Accordingly, your institution's reporting of information about cases of cancer to the Minnesota Cancer Surveillance System in accordance with the aforementioned statutes and rules is a permitted disclosure under the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

Your institution has previously been given instructions about cancer reporting procedures. If you have any questions about your reporting obligations, please contact your MCSS Field Service Representative. The enclosed FAQ prepared by the Minnesota Department of Health is for your information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally Bushhouse".

Sally Bushhouse, D.V.M., Ph.D., Director
Minnesota Cancer Surveillance System
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Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414
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