



For Immediate Release

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Association of Health Information Outsourcing Services Raises Concerns Over Impact of Pending Louisiana Medical Record Acts

BOSTON, Mass., June 11, 2008 — There are currently several Louisiana bills that aim to prevent healthcare providers from charging a fee for copies of billing records, prevent any fee for additional requested services—such as for certification of records to be presented as evidence in litigation—and to lower the rates received today for the release of medical information. The Association of Health Information Outsourcing Services (AHIOS), an organization committed to promoting excellence in the handling and dissemination of confidential patient-identifiable information, has serious concerns about the Acts’ potential impact on healthcare providers in Louisiana, as well as the precedent it sets for other states.

The Louisiana laws (HB 217, HB 1073) attempt to minimize or eliminate fees associated with the complex, labor-intensive release of information (ROI) process, thereby placing the burden of these costs on hospitals and other health organizations.

“Laws governing the release of confidential patient health information must establish fees that appropriately reimburse providers for the costs they incur in providing the information to requestors to avoid creating an unnecessary cost burden for hospitals,” said Jan McDavid, general counsel and compliance officer at HealthPort Technologies. “Certification of records is a necessary step in the release of information process, ensuring that all released information is both valid and authorized.”

One of the major issues with HB 217 in particular is that often billing records are not stored in the health information management (HIM) department, but rather at a completely different building on campus, or at a different location entirely. Therefore, when a request is made for all records (both medical and billing records of a particular patient) it is no simple task.

“AHIOS works to educate the industry about the complexity and risk involved in the ROI process and help requestors understand that it is an entirely different process than simple copying of paper,” said Joe Fournier, vice president for legal affairs and administration at ChartOne, Inc. “Electronic formats have created the perception that all a facility needs to do is click a button to send someone information, but there are several steps involved in the process and none can be neglected.”

AHIOS will continue to support any legislation that makes it easier for healthcare organizations to produce information efficiently and cost-effectively. It also encourages state legislators who are considering similar legislation to become fully educated about the ROI process before passing new laws and offers its support in this endeavor. Interested parties are encouraged to contact Bonnie Coffey at 800-688-9644 or bonnie@cminfospec.com.

About the Association of Health Information Outsourcing Services

Established in 1996, AHIOS promotes, strengthens and enhances the health information management outsourcing industry while ensuring excellence in the handling and dissemination of confidential patient-identifiable information. Its goals are to increase awareness of the value, importance and complexity of the industry’s services; establish standards of excellence for the industry of health information management outsourcing; pursue fair and equitable treatment of the industry through legislative, regulatory and legal processes; and create educational and networking opportunities for members.

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