

Eli's Rehab Report

Industry Notes: Watch For The Most Comprehensive Physical Therapy Electronic Repository To Date

The **American Physical Therapy Association** (APTA) has announced on June 10, a new collaboration with Quintiles to create a new Physical Therapy Outcomes Registry, which they visualize as the largest such electronic registry so far.

"Patient registries are an increasingly vital component of real-world, comprehensive evidence development for identifying the causes of disease and, in this case, injuries, and designing effective treatments," **Cynthia Verst**, with **Quintiles** was quoted as saying in the APTA press release.

The idea behind creating this registry is to set up benchmarks for therapists and clinicians as a means to achieving better patient outcomes by improving healthcare delivery as well as demonstrate the value of physical therapy. APTA also expects that the database will aid electronic health record systems, billing and documentation systems used by health systems, private and other facility-based practices, individual physical therapists apart from APTA chapters across the country.

"APTA is in a unique position to help physical therapists comply with requirements by payers, employers, certification boards, healthcare facilities, and other entities to ensure participation, accreditation, and adherence," said APTA president **Paul A. Rockar Jr., PT, DPT, MS** in the release.

One Physician Causes Biggest HIPAA Settlement in History

If you search your loved one's name on the internet, the last thing you want to see is his private medical records showing up in the search results. But that's exactly what happened to one stunned New Yorker, spurring a HIPAA investigation that would result in \$4.8 million in settlements.

A physician who developed apps for two Manhattan hospitals meant to deactivate his personal computer server from the hospital network, which included electronic protected health information (ePHI), setting off one of the biggest breach settlements.

"Because of a lack of technical safeguards, deactivation of the server resulted in ePHI being accessible on internet search engines," a May 7 **Department of Health and Human Services** news release noted. "The entities learned of the breach after receiving a complaint by an individual who found the ePHI of the individual's deceased partner, a former patient of the hospital, on the internet."

But that patient wasn't alone — in fact, 6,800 individuals were impacted by the breach, with their patient status, vital signs, medications and lab results vulnerable to public viewing. The resulting settlement by **New York and Presbyterian Hospital** and **Columbia University** of \$4.8 million is the largest to date since the HIPAA laws took effect.

To read more about the breach, visit www.hhs.gov/news/press/2014pres/05/20140507b.html.

Burwell Confirmed As New HHS Secretary

As expected, the popular Director of the **White House Office of Management and Budget** has become the next **HHS** leader. After sailing through two **Senate** confirmation hearings, the Senate confirmed **Sylvia Mathews Burwell** as HHS Secretary on June 5.

Burwell's focus will likely be on the continued implementation of the Affordable Care Act's "Obamacare" health law. But

she did tell senators that she hoped to avoid using the ACA-created **Independent Payment Advisory Board** (IPAB), often referred to as "super-MedPAC."