

# Health Information Compliance Alert

## 11 WHO Strategies Improve Your Patient ID Process

When it comes to properly identifying patients, WHO suggests that your organization have these systems in place:

1. Emphasize the primary responsibility of health care workers to check the identity of patients and match the correct patients with the correct care (e.g., laboratory results, specimens, procedures) before that care is administered.
2. Encourage at least two identifiers (e.g., name and date of birth) to verify a patient's identity upon admission or transfer to another hospital or care setting and prior to the administration of care. Neither of these identifiers should be the patient's room number.
3. Standardize the approaches to patient ID among different facilities within a health care system. For example, use white ID bands on which a standardized pattern or marker and specific information (e.g., name and date of birth) could be written or implementation of biometric technologies.
4. Provide clear protocols for identifying patients who lack ID and for distinguishing the identity of patients with the same name. Develop and use non-verbal approaches for identifying comatose or confused patients.
5. Encourage patients to participate in all stages of the process.
6. Encourage the labeling of containers for blood and other specimens in the presence of the patient.
7. Provide clear protocols for maintaining patient sample identities throughout pre-analytical, analytical, and post analytical processes.
8. Provide clear protocols for questioning laboratory results or other test findings when they are not consistent with the patient's clinical history.
9. Provide for repeated checking and review to prevent computer entry errors.
10. Incorporate training on procedures for checking/verifying a patient's identity into the orientation and continuing professional development for health care workers.
11. Educate patients on the importance and relevance of correct patient identification in a positive fashion that also respects concerns for privacy.