

Health Information Compliance Alert

Compliance Tools: Are You Leaving Your Patients In Limbo?

Don't let your patients think that their privacy complaints have fallen into a black-hole once they've been submitted to your organization. Have a look at these sample response letters crafted by the **American Medical Association**:

Sample Response Letter 1 -- Generic Response

This is an example of a generic letter that could be used to acknowledge those complaints that are made but do not otherwise result in a finding by your organization that any violation of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) or the organization's policies and procedures has occurred or where the organization has decided not to take any further action:

Dear : _____

Thank you for bringing to our attention your concerns regarding _____. Maintaining the privacy of health information is very important to us, and we appreciate the information you have provided. We will review your concerns and will take any necessary steps as part of our ongoing privacy compliance and improvement program. Again, thank you for your time and concern. If you have further questions about this matter, please contact _____ at _____.

Sample Response Letter 2 -- Specific Response

This is an example of a letter that could be used to both acknowledge a complaint and explain any steps taken by your organization in response to the complaint.

Dear : _____

Thank you for bringing to our attention your concerns regarding _____. Maintaining the privacy of health information is very important to us, and we appreciate the information you have provided. We have reviewed your concerns and [will take/have taken] the following steps to address this issue: _____

Again, thank you for your time and concern. If you have further questions about this matter, please contact _____ at _____.

(**Source:** HIPAA Policies & Procedures Desk Reference, copyright 2003, American Medical Association.)