

Health Information Compliance Alert

HEALTH INFORMATION NEWS

THOMPSON TO REVEAL HIT PLAN AT JULY CONFERENCE

Department of Health & Human Services Secretary **Tommy Thompson** and Health IT Coordinator Dr. **David Brailer** will deliver the first installment of a national health information technology plan at the National Health Information Infrastructure conference to be held in DC July 21, according to a HHS press release.

President Bush mandated this plan in the same April 27 executive order that established Brailer's Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. The report will detail the private and public sectors' roles in achieving HIT benefits.

What's most needed is "partnerships and cooperation between the thousands of stakeholders in this complex enterprise. This is a delicate balance, where the federal role is to lead AND to follow AND to get out of the way, all at the right times," Thompson said.

The report will set forth the guiding principals, core goals and corresponding actions that will drive the national action plan's development.

Register for the conference at www.hsrnet.net/nhii.

HOSPITAL'S RECORDS LITTER DC ROAD

A number of Washington Hospital Center's employee and patient records, including billing information, were found scattered along a service road near the National Arboretum in northeast DC, reports the Washington Times.

Though the documents did not contain information on patients' medical conditions, "the law is very clear that billing information about people is private and is protected under the law," says **D'Arcy Gue**, executive VP of Phoenix Health Systems in Montgomery Village, MD.

"Our medical records themselves are very tightly guarded," explained **Paula Faria**, a hospital spokesperson. "I don't understand how it could have gotten there. It seems like somebody had it, then they lost it," she told the WT.

"People shouldn't be taking these kinds of records home because they're supposed to be kept on site. These sorts of disclosures are not intentional, but that doesn't minimize the violation," said **Emily Stewart**, a policy analyst with DC's Health Privacy Project.

Hospital officials plan to investigate how the confidential records wound up on the side of the road.

CONGRESSIONAL HIT CAUCUS CREATED

Reps. **Patrick Kennedy** (D-RI) and **Jim Greenwood** (R-PA) created a congressional caucus that will focus on health care technology issues, reports Health Data Management.

The bipartisan co-chairs plan to gain membership throughout the House and Senate. The caucus will support policies and incentives to increase widespread adoption of information technology in health care.

Of the 16 members who've joined, the majority are Democrats.

