

## Health Information Compliance Alert

### HIPAA Enforcement: HHS TO CMS: MAY THE ENFORCEMENT BE WITH YOU

Health care providers will be dealing with a familiar agency when it comes to enforcement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act transactions and code sets standards.

Department of Health and Human Services Secretary **Tommy Thompson** Oct.15 charged the **Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services** with enforcing the HIPAA transactions rules.

"HIPAA administrative simplification is going to streamline and standardize the electronic filing and processing of health insurance claims, save money and provide better services for providers, insurers and patients," Thompson promises.

"To accomplish this will require an enforcement operation that will assure compliance and provide support for those who file and process health care claims and other transactions."

CMS Chief Operating Office **Ruben King-Shaw, Jr.** says a new office will be formed to handle the task. "Concentrating these CMS responsibilities in a new office with a single mission will give us the most efficient operation possible, while providing strong support for all our partners in the health care community," he maintains.

Enforcement of the HIPAA privacy standards remains with the HHS **Office for Civil Rights**. CMS and OCR "will work together on outreach and enforcement and on issues that touch on the responsibilities of both organizations such as application of security standards or exception determinations," according to HHS.