

Health Information Compliance Alert

Privacy Notices: ECKERD ENDOWS FAMU CHAIR TO PROTECT PATIENT PRIVACY

A murky health information policy notice has a major pharmacy chain paying to help others make sure they don't make the same mistake.

Last December the **Eckerd Corp.** was under scrutiny by the Florida Attorney General, who alleged the company had customers sign a form that didn't sufficiently make it clear that they were authorizing commercial use of their personal medical information. However, Eckerd cooperated with AG **Bob Butterworth** and, without admitting wrong-doing, the company agreed to fund an ethics chair at the **Florida A&M** School of Pharmacy to the tune of \$1 million, according to a July 10 release. Additionally, Eckerd agreed to:

1. refrain from using prescription pick-up logs or forms to obtain customer authorization for marketing purposes;
2. restrict direct marketing of prescription drugs to customers who have provided written consent to do so;
3. fully advise customers of not only the type of medical information that will be disclosed, but to whom that data will be disclosed; and
4. provide "in every communication the company sends to customers" an easy way to withdraw consent; and other provisions.

Butterworth said the primary concern of a pharmacist should be the safe and effective treatment of its patients, "not marketing opportunities."