

Health Information Compliance Alert

Reader Question: Is A Complete Security Risk Analysis Optional For Small Providers?

Question: As a very small healthcare provider, do we really need to conduct an in-depth risk analysis?

Answer: The idea that a security risk analysis is optional for small providers is a myth, according to the **HHS Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology** (ONC). All providers who qualify as covered entities (CEs) under HIPAA must perform a risk analysis. And you must conduct one if you want to receive EHR incentive payments.

You can perform the risk analysis yourself using self-help tools; you don't necessarily need to outsource the task, ONC says. "However, doing a thorough and professional risk analysis that will stand up to a compliance review will require expert knowledge that could be obtained through services of an experienced outside professional."

Remember: You don't need to use any specific method, ONC notes. "A risk analysis can be performed in countless ways." To get started, try using the Security Risk Assessment Tool at <http://www.healthit.gov/providers-professionals/security-risk-assessment-tool>