

## Health Information Compliance Alert

### READER QUESTION: User Identification and Sharing PHI

**Question:** Regarding the security rule's user identification requirements: If one wanted to have a limited read-only report containing PHI on a PC screen, and all that was displayed on the PC screen was the report, would this be a definite violation of the requirements? In this case, only key staff would have access to the information. What does HIPAA have to say about this?

California Subscriber

**Answer:** "This is the one place the guidance for the final [security] rule differs from the proposed rule," says **Fred Langston**, CISSP, senior principal consultant with **Guardent** in Seattle. Due to input from nursing groups that work in hospital environments like ERs and CCUs, the user identification rule has been relaxed to allow for group accounts shared in this environment.

This kind of arrangement can't be just for convenience, warns Langston; it should be driven by a business' functional need and would require all the elements the reader described.