

Health Information Compliance Alert

READER QUESTIONS: IS INFORMATION ON WHITE BOARDS PROTECTED?

Question: Our clinical nursing and therapy staff would like to install white boards in semi-private patients' rooms to document patient needs. Is this allowable under HIPAA?

Answer: "The Office for Civil Rights has made it clear that white boards are permissible," asserts attorney **Kristen Rosati** of Phoenix-based **Coppersmith Gordon Schermer Owens & Nelson**.

The Bottom Line: You have to take reasonable steps to reduce the amount of patient information that can be seen by visitors, Rosati counsels.

Most important: "If you believe [white boards] are the best way to provide important information for the care of the patient, you just need to document that process," she assures.