

Health Information Compliance Alert

Reader Questions: Put Your Grand Opening In the Public Eye

Question: Our doctors are opening a new location on the other side of our city. Can we send our patients both regular and electronic notices of the grand opening and invite them to request permanent appointments at the new facility?

Wisconsin subscriber

Answer: "Yes," affirms **Robert Markette**, an attorney with Gilliland & Caudill in Indianapolis. "A provider can communicate with patients about the products or services it offers," he says.

The Bottom Line: A grand-opening notice sent to all your patients would fall under an exception to the marketing category. But, because the purpose of the notice is to announce a new service or location, it's OK, Markette asserts. Warning: You cannot send notices for programs or facilities unrelated to your organization, he cautions.