

## Health Information Compliance Alert

### Reader Questions: Saturday Night Fever

Question: How and when should providers distribute their NPPs if a patient calls up on a Saturday night seeking a prescription refill?

Florida Subscriber

Answer: Providers must distribute NPPs to their patients no later than the first date of service delivery, reminds attorney **John Gilliland** with **Gilliland & Caudill** in Indianapolis. With that said, renewing a prescription over the telephone constitutes a service delivery and providers should make every effort to mail out an NPP to the patient on the same day as the call, he states.

But if the call occurs on a Saturday night when the office is closed? The **Department of Health and Human Services** has said that the provider should distribute the NPP on the "same date you provide the service ...quot; if possible," reports Gilliland. "And in my opinion, that allows you to wait until Monday" to mail out the NPP, he says.

When mailing out those NPPs, don't forget to send along an acknowledgement of receipt form, adds Gilliland. And while the odds of getting the acknowledgement sent back to you are slim to none, make sure that you've documented your efforts and the reason you couldn't obtain the written acknowledgement, he directs.