HIPAA Privacy Rule Timeline

On August 21, 1996 the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was signed into law. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released the final rule on August 14, 2002 that modified the existing Privacy Regulations declared under the Administrative Simplification subtitle of HIPAA. This rule is intended to balance strong privacy protections that do not interfere with patient access to, or the quality of, health care delivery. The following timeline illustrates the federal rule making process involved with the Privacy Regulation:

- 8/21/1996 - HIPAA passed into law
- 11/3/1999 - Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) Published
- 12/28/2000 - Final Rule published
- 3/30/2001 - Congressional Comment Period (60 days)
- 4/14/2001 - Final Rule re-published under the Bush administration
- 3/27/2002 - Proposed changes to Final Rule
- 8/14/2002 - Final Rule
- 4/14/2003 - Compliance Date

As indicated above, federal rule making is a lengthy and time-consuming process. However, almost seven years after HIPAA was passed into law, the April 14, 2003 effective date for the Privacy Regulation is now quickly approaching. If you wish to learn more about HIPAA please visit the MCW HIPAA website at http://infoscope.mcw.edu/display/router.asp?DocID=7961. In addition, please look for additional information on HIPAA in upcoming WORLD articles.