

AMA HIPAA TOOLKIT

The AMA yesterday [announced](#) a new toolkit available at www.ama-assn.org/go/hipaa to help physicians navigate the sweeping new revisions to the federal privacy and security rules for health information that go into effect on Sept. 23, 2013. The Department of Health and Human Services issued a final rule last January that revises and extends required safeguards for protected health information established under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996.

Below is a brief article on the toolkit, which can be used in e-newsletters, e-mails or other communications to physician practices. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Compliance for revised HIPAA rules Sept. 23; AMA tools simplify process

A new [toolkit](#) released by the AMA can help physicians navigate sweeping new revisions to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy and security rules. Physicians must comply with them by Sept. 23.

Among the key changes doctors must make for the Sept. 23 deadline are new agreements with business associates that handle patient information and privacy notices to share with patients and increased security measures for patient data.

Physicians can turn to the AMA's free toolkit for initial guidance in meeting the new requirements. The toolkit offers practical resources physicians can begin using in their practices:

- A [physician primer](#) provides an easy-to-understand breakdown of the revised rules to help physicians review and update their existing HIPAA policies and procedures.
- A template [business associate agreement](#) and a [notice of privacy practices](#) are ready for adoption in the practice.
- A [HIPAA security resource](#) explains how to encrypt patient data.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued the 563-page HIPAA [omnibus rule](#) in January, revising and extending required safeguards for protected health information and expanding individual rights of patients. The updated law also tightens requirements on physicians when patient information is breached. As a result, physician practices could face more legal scrutiny and higher fines in the event of an information breach.