

Report on Patient Privacy Volume 19, Number 1. January 31, 2019 HHS Looking for Input on Changes to Privacy Rule Affecting Care Coordination

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HHS is seeking input on how HIPAA rules—particularly the HIPAA privacy rule—can be changed to further the goal of promoting coordinated, value-based care. The request for information (RFI) also focuses on the nationwide opioid crisis, asking how HIPAA rule changes may facilitate the sharing of treatment information with parents, loved ones and caregivers of adults facing health emergencies.

“In addressing the opioid crisis, we’ve heard stories about how the privacy rule can get in the way of patients and families getting the help they need,” says HHS Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan. “We’ve also heard how the rule may impede other forms of care coordination that can drive value.”

The RFI starts the long process of revising HIPAA rules to better enable a switch from fee-for-service medicine to value-based care, which requires significant sharing of protected health information (PHI) for purposes of care coordination, outcomes research and quality improvement. But even as this process begins, provider organizations are struggling with ways to comply with current regulations while still working with payers eager to move to value-based contracts and risk-sharing initiatives (*RPP 12/18, p. 1*).

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