

Compliance Today – June 2018 Healthcare system "rulebook"

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I have always been a fan of any type of word game — SCRABBLE[®] being the game of choice. And, not surprisingly, as a compliance professional I was never the type of person who liked to forego the rulebook. If we were playing, we were keeping score. I habitually use the Official SCRABBLE[®] Players Dictionary and never forget to bring it out at the start of a game. I use the "challenge" option on a regular basis, and if a word isn't in the official dictionary, it cannot be used. Plain and simple, no exceptions.

Much like the official dictionary is intended to be the entire universe of playable words in the world of SCRABBLE[®], policies and procedures in a healthcare system are meant to cover, whether generally or more specifically, the universe of questions and day-to-day issues that arise in a particular area or department of a healthcare system or that apply to the healthcare system as a whole. Certainly, not all issues that arise will be spelled out in a specific policy or procedure. Undoubtedly, employees will have to rely on additional direction from departmental leaders for more specific questions. However, policies and procedures in a healthcare system are to be used as guidelines.

When making a determination as to the best course of action to take, knowing that policies and procedures are readily available can be invaluable. This applies to all policies throughout the system, and, of course, the compliance policies that all employees must be mindful of while completing their daily tasks. Much like the SCRABBLE[®] Dictionary, the policies and procedures that a healthcare system creates and maintains really set the tone for the system itself and create a world in which boundaries are established and rules and regulations are applied.

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