

## Compliance Today – October 2019

### Lessons from life: A compliance perspective

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By Sam Rose, CHC

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Sometimes I just don't know when to stop, which is to say, I don't know how to stop being a compliance professional. As hard as I try to leave the office at the office, I tend to find myself in situations where my "compliance brain" overrides my "not at work brain."

I've also learned that compliance professionals can benefit from a skill that isn't taught in schools or certification courses: humor. Sometimes humor comes from a bit of self-deprecation, "I know this is a hard thing for you; I don't like myself right now either." Other times we need to find humor in the less-than-clear nature of regulations, the constant audits, or the extra work we tend to bring those around us. Well-timed, tactful humor can break down barriers and help build relationships.

Other times I end up laughing at myself, by myself, because of how my life has turned out. Do I really get excited when CMS releases their annual updates to the Medicare Communications and Marketing Guidelines document? Do I really look forward to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Spring Conference and Audit and Enforcement conferences every year? Can I really not go on a run and leave compliance behind?

It was a perfect Saturday morning. The weather was excellent, the sunrise was going off wonderfully and, most importantly, I was nowhere near a desk, a policy, an incident, a regulator, or anything that had to do with healthcare or compliance. I was three miles deep into a ten-mile run on a beautiful path near a river. There were few people out but an abundance of wildlife and tranquility.

I rounded a bend on the trail and noticed a sign in the grass—it was rusty, battered, and looked quite forgotten. The sign indicated a buried utility line of some sort and included a phone number to call with questions or issues related to said utility.

I'm sure the thousands of people who pass this sign each week go right on by and don't think twice about it. But for me, a combination of being a slow runner and working in compliance made this sign extremely important. For the next mile I contemplated the sign and phone number:

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