

Compliance Today – March 2022 The Compliance Institute reflections and advice from a longtime attendee

By Charlie Colitre, BBA, CHC, CHCP

Charlie Colitre (cec1141@aol.com) is President, Healthcare Compliance Consultants, New Franklin, OH.



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I began attending the Health Care Compliance Association (HCCA) Compliance Institute (CI) in 2002. I haven't missed one since, including the virtual CIs in 2020 and 2021. I say that not to brag but to provide a background for my CI experiences.

My perspective on CIs has changed a bit since that first one. I was very new to compliance in 2002 and was looking for all the help and advice I could find. I had joined HCCA that year, and this publication, *Compliance Today*, was one of my sources for keeping abreast of my new, second career. I had attended several American Health Lawyers Association/HCCA compliance conferences in Baltimore and met some great people and gained a greater insight into compliance. But I wanted more.

At one of those American Health Lawyers Association/HCCA conferences I met Margaret Dragon, the driving force for this publication. Margaret convinced me to attend the next CI in Chicago, network with other compliance professionals, and contribute to HCCA. I took her up on that challenge and put in motion plans to attend the Sixth Annual CI in Chicago the following spring.

My first CI

The Chicago CI was a small event compared to recent CIs. There were only about 600 attendees, but what an opportunity to learn and network! The speakers and breakout sessions were just what I needed at that stage of my compliance career. The topics were timely and in-depth. In addition, I met a number of compliance professionals, many of whom I still keep in contact with and who have mentored me over the ensuing years.

In those days, the tote bags everyone received contained a three-ring binder with handouts for every breakout session. Not bad, but through the years the sessions increased, as did the binders. When, at last, the session handouts were put on electronic media, the binders had increased to two very large volumes. Tough to tote around and expensive to ship home. Newer CI attendees likely don't appreciate the ability to access session handouts on electronic devices without hauling around 12 pounds of material.

The CIs have taken me across the United States to Chicago, New Orleans, Las Vegas, Dallas, Orlando, Washington, San Diego, Boston, and now, in 2022, to Phoenix. Several CI locations, of course, were repeats, but all were fabulous venues.

In the last few years, I have extended my CI trips for a few extra days to visit family and see some tourist sites I probably would have never visited otherwise.

During the first eight or nine CIs, I attended nearly every breakout session I could fit in my schedule. My goal was to attend a few sessions where I had little or no knowledge of the subject matter in order to expand my base

compliance knowledge. With the remainder of the sessions, I tried to enhance my skills and understanding of areas of greater familiarity and in which I was working at the time.

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