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## NEWS BRIEF | 07.16.10

### Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issues new rules for HIPAA Privacy and Security

The OCR proposed a new rule on July 8, which promises to strengthen and widen the enforcement of HIPAA. The modifications include:

1. Placing additional restrictions on disclosures of PHI with regards to marketing, fundraising, and health plans
2. Allowing patients greater access to their health information
3. Mandating that business associates of HIPAA-covered entities follow the same regulations as the covered entities themselves
4. Preventing the sale of PHI without prior authorization of the patient

HHS has also created a website, where the agency will provide current policies and future privacy initiatives.

[View the privacy website »](#)

[View the HHS Press Release »](#)

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### HHS releases Final Rules for Meaningful Use and Electronic Health Records

On July 13th, two companion rules regarding meaningful use and standards and certification of EHRs were released.

There were several major changes in the CMS final rule on meaningful use. For one, eligible professionals and eligible hospitals will experience greater flexibility with regards to the

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Colleen Sauter  
763.230.1245  
[csauter@ohitx.org](mailto:csauter@ohitx.org)

required objectives for demonstrating meaningful use. The requirements have been divided into two groups: a "core" group of objectives which must all be met and a "menu" set of objectives that hospitals and providers can pick and choose five to demonstrate.

In addition, the list of objectives was expanded to include the provision of condition-specific patient education resources and the recording of advance directives for eligible hospitals. The definition of a hospital-based EP was clarified as an individual who performs almost all of their services in an inpatient hospital setting or emergency room only. Finally, the rule expands the definition of acute-care hospital to include designated Critical Access Hospitals for the Medicaid incentive program.

The Final Rule will be published in the Federal Register on July 28th. The Final Rule released by the ONC on standards and certification remained the same.

[View the CMS MU Final Rule »](#)

[View a comprehensive overview of the changes: »](#)

[View the ONC Final Rule on Standards, Implementation Specifications and Certification Criteria: »](#)

[View the HHS Press Release »](#)

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## **EHR Final Rules provide blueprints to better healthcare**

With the recent published rulings on EHR certifications and standards and meaningful use, Dr. David Blumenthal believes we have the foundation necessary to support the effort to improve healthcare across America. EHRs provide a wide array of benefits:

- Make medical histories readily available to physicians so they may make more knowledgeable clinical decisions
- Allow for easier tracking of results
- Provide warnings of serious health conditions and possible drug interactions through automatic alerts
- Enable e-Prescribing

While many have already begun their EHR implementation

process, there are still many more who have yet to do so. The rulings that have been released will serve as a guide for those embarking upon their EHR journey.

[Read Dr. Blumenthal's full blog post »](#)

Gain more up-to-date meaningful use information by visiting our [resource section](#).

**Open Health IT Exchange (OHITX)**  
5500 Wayzata Boulevard, Suite 500  
Minneapolis, MN 55416

Phone: 763.230.1255  
Fax: 952.230.9002  
[info@ohitx.org](mailto:info@ohitx.org)

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Open Health IT Exchange  
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Suite 500  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55416  
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