

**CLIENT ALERT: September 22, 2008**

**NEW HIPAA GUIDANCE ON COMMUNICATIONS  
WITH PATIENTS' FAMILIES AND FRIENDS**

OCR recently released new guidance, both for patients and for providers, regarding provider communications with a patient's family and friends. The provider guide contains a useful chart on the last page that summarizes the situations in which you may, or may not, discuss a patient's status with family, friends, or other people. You should review your organization's policies concerning such communications to ensure that you are in accord with this new guidance, paying particular attention to chart notations concerning consent to disclose and telephone identification verification procedures. In addition, you should consider whether to give your patients a copy of the patient guide for their information.

To view the provider guidance, visit: [http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/provider\\_ffg.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/provider_ffg.pdf)

To view the patient guidance, visit: [http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/consumer\\_ffg.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/consumer_ffg.pdf)

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