

Weekly Compliance Corner's 11/11/11



Anthelio Health is committed to the confidentiality and security of our customers' and their patients' information.

These weekly reminders are designed to refresh your memory about your valuable role in privacy and security under HIPAA and other federal and state laws.

Should you have any questions or concerns pertaining to the privacy and/or security rules, please contact the Anthelio Health Regulatory Compliance Department at 214-257-7114.

Thank you,

Paula Ciotti

Anthelio Health does not warrant the accuracy or completeness of any of the information contained in this reminder. Nothing contained in this reminder is or should be construed as legal advice. Readers should consult with their own legal advisor prior to using or relying on the information contained in the reminder.



Who's To Blame?

Over the past year, as many as 2,000 patients may have received incorrect forms of medication following discharge from five hospitals in Rhode Island, all operated by Lifespan. The patients were prescribed timed-release medications but may have received the regular form of the medication instead. Typically, timed-release medications are taken once a day versus regular forms taken multiple times a day. Although there have been no reports of any patient harm, Lifespan has begun notifying all affected patients.

Lifespan said that a software error was to blame, which generated medication instructions for the discharged patients.

Is this an information technology (IT) problem? Human error? A combination of both? Probably both. Software is created by human beings; applications and systems run by human beings; electronic information printed by human beings.

What does this mean for Anthelions? It means that any changes to software, any upgrades, any new applications or systems, must be fully and completely tested prior to going live. The better the project plans for testing, the more seamless the transition will be and less chance for errors.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to evaluate health IT safety concerns and to recommend ways that both the public and private sectors can make patient care safer using health IT. Coincidentally, the report was published this week. It calls for greater oversight by the public and private sectors in order to protect all of us from potential medical errors associated with the use of IT in patient care. All of us, from users to vendors, from clinicians to patients, play a role in the safe use of health IT. The IOM's recommendations include improving transparency in the reporting of health IT safety incidents and enhancing monitoring of health IT products.

Today is Veterans Day, also known as Armistice Day. This day is the anniversary of the signing of the armistice which ended the World War I hostilities between the Allied nations and Germany in 1918.

Anthelio proudly supports and thanks all its Veterans and their families for their services.