

## **Announcement of HIPAA Privacy & Security Audit Program from HHS Office of Civil Rights**

From the HHS website:

**Overview:** The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, in Section 13411 of the HITECH Act, requires HHS to provide for periodic audits to ensure covered entities and business associates are complying with the HIPAA Privacy and Security Rules and Breach Notification standards. To implement this mandate, OCR is piloting a program to perform up to **150 audits of covered entities** to assess privacy and security compliance. Audits conducted during the pilot phase will begin November 2011 and conclude by December 2012.

**Program Objectives:** The audit program serves as a new part of OCR's health information privacy and security compliance program. OCR will use the audit program to assess HIPAA compliance efforts by a range of covered entities, Audits present a new opportunity to examine mechanisms for compliance, identify best practices and discover risks and vulnerabilities that may not have come to light through OCR's ongoing complaint investigations and compliance reviews. OCR will broadly share best practices gleaned through the audit process and guidance targeted to observed compliance challenges via this web site and other outreach portals.

You can find more information about the planned audits here:  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/enforcement/audit/index.html>