CASE STUDY: LARGE MIDWEST LONG-TERM CARE SERVICES PROVIDER

Proactively staying on top of HIPAA/HITECH compliance demands

HIPAA/HITECH compliance needs

Mandatory compliance with the detailed requirements of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act regulations is a challenging and time-consuming task. These regulations protect the personal information of patients; failure to comply may result in significant fines, and civil monetary penalties, sometimes totaling millions of dollars. The potential financial losses, as well as the reputational damage, emphasize the critical importance of compliance with HIPAA and the HITECH Act.

Proactive measures

An organization recently recognized as one of the Top 50 Largest Nursing Facility Companies (as ranked by Provider magazine) realized the critical importance of staying ahead of the rigors of HIPAA/HITECH compliance demands and wanted to drive enhancements to their internal compliance program.

The company’s corporate compliance and privacy officer noted, “Our company has had a comprehensive compliance program in place for some time and we recognize the value that formal outside reviews by industry experts can offer. Our approach is to encourage proactive improvements rather than be forced to retroactively respond to regulatory audits. We already had an existing relationship with RSM with respect to our audit and tax services. With RSM, we have always gotten great service from people who understand our industry. Working with RSM’s industry-specific consulting resources just made sense for our compliance needs as well.”

RSM’s HIPAA/HITECH consulting team performed a readiness review and provided a current-to-future-state action plan. The team performed the HIPAA/HITECH readiness review as well as prepared a HIPAA/HITECH risk assessment template.

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Corporate compliance officer and privacy officer, Large Midwestern long-term care services provider
“As HIPAA/HITECH subject matter experts, the RSM team was credible and communicated often about their findings. They quickly understood our practices and proactively identified areas we needed to improve to withstand a possible HIPAA audit. Throughout the process, the team was very accessible for any follow-up communication,” said the compliance officer.

“While we knew our cupboard wasn’t bare, we had some areas that weren’t as robust as we wanted,” speaking of the company’s existing HIPAA/HITECH compliance program. “RSM ultimately identified specific areas of focused improvement, which formed a foundation for structuring ongoing risk assessments. Their review identified categories to address, which gave us the basis to form a HIPAA steering committee. Still in existence, this committee meets monthly to work on and improve upon these identified categories.”

Continuous improvement; ongoing help

“Everyone involved with our compliance program said the engagement with RSM was well worth the investment,” the compliance officer said. “It kick-started our program enhancements. The HIPAA/HITECH world continues to evolve with the recent issuance of the HIPAA ‘Mega’ Rule. This project set a baseline and points us to the future. It improved our infrastructure, created greater HIPAA/HITECH awareness, identified roles and put processes in place for us to continue to improve upon. That is a great result!”