

Data Privacy: How Big a Compliance Challenge?

Health Care Compliance Association & Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics

Objective:

The purpose of this study was “to both identify compliance officers’ areas of responsibility as well as their assessment of the risk”. This has become an increasing area of risk after numerous data leaks and the implementation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Methods:

This survey of compliance and ethics professionals chosen from the database of the Health Care Compliance Association and Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics was conducted in January 2011. Subjects were selected from public companies, private companies, and not-for-profit organizations, and yielded 518 respondents.

Key Findings:

- 77% of respondents reported that compliance is responsible for overseeing data protection and privacy
- 82% of respondents reported an increase in time spent on this issue
- 77% expect there to be more time invested next year
- Top areas of concern for compliance professionals regarding potential privacy breaches:
 - Accidental breach by employee (61% considered it somewhat or very likely)
 - Accidental breach by 3rd party (41% considered it somewhat or very likely)
 - Intentional employee breach (30% considered it somewhat or very likely)

Conclusion:

Organizations have greatly increased their spending and time investments related to compliance issues and feel as though they are handling the new compliance requirements well. They need to continue to do this, as well as continue to train and implement controls to protect their customers’ data.