

Fred Buhr, MSSW

From: Fred Buhr, MSSW [fredbuhr@metasteward.net]
Sent: Thursday, September 09, 2010 9:20 PM
To: 'mcdonell@co.dane.wi.us'
Cc: 'county_board_recipients@co.dane.wi.us'

Attachments: GenterEmails07022010.pdf; Information Systems Management Study2006 1.pdf



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Information Systems Management

Dear Dane County Board Chair McDonnell:

In December 2006, the National Association of State Units on Aging (SUAs) issued a report on the status of information systems utilized by aging units throughout the United States. One disturbing finding was that only 57% of the SUAs indicated that they believed they were in compliance with HIPAA. I have attached copies of several pages of the study with HIPAA references highlighted.

Under the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act of 2009, HIPAA privacy and security requirements have been dramatically strengthened. Business associates (BAs) of HIPAA covered entities are now required to report security breaches to covered entities. (Please see attached file: GenterEmails07022010.pdf)

As the prime example, the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County requires all senior centers to utilize the Social Assistance Management System. SAMS is a Web-based application hosted on AgingNetwork.com, owned by Harmony Information Systems of Reston, Va. (I am the volunteer data entry operator for the McFarland Senior Outreach program, which operates meal sites in McFarland and Cambridge.) Because of the failure of Dane County AAA to institute HIPAA-required security provisions, Dane County potentially could be subject to millions of dollars in penalties for HIPAA violations. But at an even more costly level, Dane County AAA might be the Internet gateway that permits systemic fraud accounting for billions of dollars of fraudulent payments related to medical identity theft.

September is Senior Center Month. It should be the month for Dane County and the nationwide aging network to review compliance with HIPAA rules and regulations. Details of my efforts over the past three years to inform agencies of the need to take remedial action can be found on my website: <http://www.metasteward.net>.

Sincerely,

Fred Buhr

Fred Buhr, MSSW
Metasteward LLC

fredbuhr@metasteward.net