

Comply-Health[™]: Finally, a 360 View of Compliance, Security & Privacy Issues

By **Nora Haile**
Contributing Editor
Healthcare News



Imagine being in compliance with federal regulations, no matter how often they change, covering your entire security and privacy footprint, thereby minimizing the legal risks that come with being a healthcare organization in today's world. Sounds dreamy, kind of like head-in-the-clouds type thinking, right?

Well, half right. "In the cloud" is exactly where you'll find Comply-Health. It's a new, software-as-a-service (SaaS) healthcare privacy, security and compliance solution. The brainchild of Apgar & Associ-

ates, LLC and Atlas Systems, Inc., it melds Chris Apgar's nearly two decades of regulatory compliance experience and Atlas Systems' strategic technology development expertise.

Apgar explains, "I've been working with health plans, enterprise organizations, business associates and private practices for years – using my own proprietary method to help them with compliance issues. The alliance with Atlas Systems integrates the compliance and healthcare industry knowledge with the software solution. Comply-Health is the first of its kind. It addresses all three parts of the security world: administrative safeguards, physical safeguards and technical safeguards as well as privacy and other pertinent regulations."

Comply-Health is much broader than just HIPAA. In fact, it comes pre-loaded with most federal regulations pertaining to healthcare privacy and security, and regulatory changes are loaded as they occur. Healthcare organizations will find it much easier to maintain documentation, keep policies and procedures current and be highly responsive to auditors or even legal counsel. "We believe privacy of-

icers will look at Comply-Health as compliance insurance," says Apgar. "It enables compliance management to self-audit their organizations, and compare results across timeframes." Updates occur on the back end, and the user(s) receive an electronic notification of which policies and procedures were affected. Then an audit report lists recommendations of documentation updates that need to occur in order for the organization to remain in compliance.

Milind Abhyankar of Atlas Systems enthusiastically touts the software's benefits, "Critical discussions regarding policy matters, the history of a particular issue, proof that you've taken steps to remain in compliance – everything is available in one place with secure portal access." He emphasizes a major advantage: that SaaS doesn't infringe on anyone's existing IT infrastructure. Because of its deployment, maintenance and accessibility through a secure portal, healthcare organizations avoid an additional administrative burden and associated costs. "It's as close to plug-and-play as possible given the gravity and complexity of the subject matter," he says.

Federal regulatory compliance is

a large portion of the burden facing healthcare leaders, but there are state regulations to consider as well. According to Apgar and Abhyankar, the package offers the purchase option for state-relevant legal requirements to be added. So if a multi-state organization wants to deploy the solution enterprise-wide, each area could access its relevant state regulations. Private practices and small clinics benefit as well, because the scalable solution offers various subscription levels to fit organizational type and size. Examples of available customization include specialty audit criteria, such as an alcohol and chemical dependency clinic may need, tailored reports, organization-specific tweaks or advanced end user audit training.

Healthcare executives gain a 360-view of their compliance status. An executive dashboard denotes compliance risk levels in order of priority, with straightforward green-yellow-red indicators. Apgar explains, “The key is to know what the most urgent need is, the highest organizational risk, then

document what the organization does to address it. Demonstrate due diligence. That takes vigilance, which takes time. Comply-Health brings automation to what was formerly a time-consuming, often daunting process.”

Daunting indeed. Consider that the HITECH Act (Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health) regarding PHI broadens HIPAA, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act concerning customer personal financial information, emerging business models regarding health information exchanges – all add to the ongoing stress privacy officers deal with daily to protect their organizations and their customers from breaches. And be aware: great network security doesn’t equate to compliance. That can cost – both money and reputation.

Breaches are expensive. Apgar refers to three large monetary settlements: Providence Health & Services (\$100,000), RiteAid Pharmacy (\$1 million) and CVS Caremark (\$2.25 million). Then

there’s the recent international study by the Ponemon Institute, citing that “in 2009, the average cost of a data breach was \$3.4 million.” It goes on to report that for U.S. companies, those costs tend to be higher (\$204 per customer vs. \$142 international average). Another point the study makes is that “the most expensive breach remediation cost one U.S. company \$31 million, while the least expensive was \$750,000.”

Within the litigious and penalty-prone healthcare arena, an end-to-end solution that gives healthcare organizations the ability to manage privacy and security risk effectively and efficiently places Comply-Health in an enviable position.

Visit the WEDI conference (5/2-5/5, Bellevue, WA) to view a demo of Comply-Health™ or contact Chris Apgar at 503.384.2538 or capgar@apgarandassoc.com.

Nora Haile is a Contributing Editor to the Healthcare News and can be reached at nora@nhaile.com.

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