

Report on Patient Privacy Volume 21, Number 8. August 12, 2021 Former OCR Director: Expect More Records Access Settlements

By Theresa Defino

In June, the HHS Office for Civil Rights announced a \$5,000 settlement with a West Virginia diabetes practice OCR said took nearly two years to honor a patient's medical records request^[1] —the 19th such agreement since former Director Roger Severino launched the initiative in September 2019 and the agency's 20th overall.

A political appointee, Severino resigned in January; to the concern of some, including Severino himself, the director's job has remained vacant as of early August and tasks are multiplying.^[2] Severino and fellow former director Leon Rodriguez also shared their experiences on the job.^[3]

Among the questions to confront a new director is whether the records access effort should continue—in Severino's view, it should. Moreover, Severino told *RPP* that more than two dozen additional cases of alleged records access violations were heading toward a formal resolution when he left.

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