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U. of Cincinnati Pays OCR \$65K to Settle Records Complaint

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In its continuing quest to ensure that patients and family members or their representatives can access medical records, the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has imposed fines and corrective action plans (CAPs) on a dozen organizations—and now it has snagged a university hospital.

In 2019, OCR issued two settlements to organizations it said had thwarted the records requests of patients, but it picked up speed last year, issuing 10 more. Two were issued in September and early October.^[1]

OCR accelerated that pace in November, issuing three more access settlements, among them the University of Cincinnati Medical Center (UCMC), which has the distinction of being the 12th target of OCR's access initiative and the only academic medical center.^[2]

According to the agency, a woman waited from February until May 2019 for UCMC to “send an electronic copy of her medical records maintained in UCMC’s electronic health record to her lawyers” before filing a complaint to OCR. The request was fulfilled in August of that year, according to OCR. Under the privacy rule, HIPAA covered entities have 30 days to respond to such a request.

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