

Compliance Today – April 2019 OCR settlement with a small physician practice: Key lessons learned

By Jay P. Anstine

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On November 26, 2018, the Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced a settlement with a small physician practice relating to an alleged HIPAA violation.^[1] More specifically, Allergy Associates of Hartford, PC (Allergy Associates) agreed to pay \$125,000 to resolve allegations that one of its physicians improperly disclosed patient protected health information (PHI).

According to the settlement, it was alleged that an Allergy Associates' patient presented to one of their clinic locations back in February 2015. The patient was denied service by one of their physicians, citing a service animal that accompanied the patient. Subsequent to this interaction, the patient contacted a local news station and spoke with a reporter about what occurred. Following this discussion, the news reporter contacted Allergy Associates to discuss the complaint with the physician.

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