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Maintaining HIPAA compliance as OCR modernizes: Two questions to ask

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recently announced updates to its Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Breach Reporting Tool,[1] which gives healthcare providers an opportunity to examine their breach reporting and investigation processes to better meet modern compliance demands.

The HIPAA update comes as the healthcare industry faces a continued increase in the number of breaches, with 329 breaches of 500 records or more reported in 2016 alone. This is an 18%increase from 2015 and the highest total since OCR started publishing major breaches it was actively investigating.[2] Many of these breaches have been triggered in large part by the unprecedented rise in cyberattacks that target provider organizations, placing many on the defensive and prompting them to reexamine both their cybersecurity efforts and privacy compliance processes.