

Report on Patient Privacy Volume 18, Number 10. October 31, 2018 'Working With Media Is Vital': Hospitals Defend ABC Show

By HCCA Staff

On Sept. 20, the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) announced it would be collecting nearly \$1 million from Brigham and Women's Hospital, Massachusetts General Hospital (Mass General), and Boston Medical Center for their roles in the taping of a 2014–2015 ABC News series, *Save My Life: Boston Trauma* (see story, p. 1).

Typically when covered entities agree to settlements with the OCR over alleged HIPAA violations, they're pretty mum afterward besides issuing what are little more than rote affirmations to protect patient privacy.

Not so with OCR's most recent settlement.

While declining to answer questions from *RPP*, Brigham and Women's and Mass General issued a detailed defense of their involvement in the show, describing the settlement as necessary to avoid "formal proceedings." However, the settlement is arguably a formal proceeding. The hospitals termed any theoretical violations simply "technical," and described the steps taken to shield patients and other individuals—including training the media about HIPAA.

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