

COMPLIANCE CALENDAR 2017

You know that staying compliant with billing, privacy, and employment law is essential for risk management.

But let's face it: you are so busy putting out fires all day that compliance often falls to the bottom of the list.

And that puts your practice at risk.

So Medical Risk Institute made this handy, dandy (*and, dare we say it, fun*) calendar to help you keep up with some of the highest priority compliance tasks each month - and all year long.



January

- Happy New Year!** As the saying goes, out with the old in with the new. Properly dispose of expired samples and supplies before Jan 31.
- Review all those 1099 forms** that the accountant sent against the list of your practice's Business Associates. Make sure your practice has a current Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with all contractors. And while you are at it, review all BAAs with vendors who have access to your PHI to make sure they are current too.
- Plan ahead and schedule continuing medical education now.** Resolve that this year there will be no need for last minute CME!



February

- This is American Heart Month.** In the spirit of having a healthy heart, make sure staff CPR training is up to date. And do not forget to note all training in your OSHA log.
- National Tooth Fairy Day is February 28.** (*Who knew, right?*) Determine if there is any additional money under the practice's pillow by analyzing all providers' E&M code patterns against state and national norms for your specialty.

Save yourself time and hassle by using the [E&M Analyzer](#), an Excel-based product that graphically illustrates whether physician code usage patterns are above or below their peers. All you have to do is generate an E&M code frequency report from your practice management system and enter that data into the [E&M Analyzer](#). Oh, and of course you'll need to file the results of the analysis in your Compliance Program.

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March

- It is March Madness!** While offices across the country are conducting random drawings of NCAA teams, the Office of Civil Rights is randomly selecting practices for HIPAA audits. Prepare your practice's HIPAA Risk Assessment before the NCAA Championship Game.
- Wow, we are already nearing the end of Q1.** If you have not scheduled coding and billing training for staff and physicians, do that now. Contact the hospital to find out if courses are being offered locally. If you are a surgical specialist, register for regional workshops or Webinars taught by [KarenZupko & Associates](#). [AAPC](#) and [AHIMA](#) are also good resources for general coding training and certification.



April

- It is Records and Information Management month!** In celebration of this exciting news, break out your Disaster Recovery Plan and make sure it is up to date.
- Speaking of information management, ask your IT consultant or provider to review your information systems.** Confirm that all of the software being used in the practice is still supported by its producer. HIPAA considers unsupported software a *per se* violation. (*Yikes.*)
- Use the February analysis of your provider's E&M codes to randomly select medical records and conduct a chart audit.** Follow the documentation evaluation procedure outlined in your Compliance Program. Still do not have a Compliance Program? Stop everything and put one together now.



May

- Hepatitis Awareness Month reminds all of us to be careful with those sharps and avoid blood borne pathogens.** So this month, conduct annual OSHA training for staff.
- While we are on the topic of OSHA, make sure all proper documentation and signage is current and available.**



June

- Conduct annual HIPAA/patient privacy training in early June, before the kids are out of school.**
- Properly dispose of expired samples and supplies.** It has been six months since you last did this.



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July

- It is time for summer vacation, and that includes a vacation from compliance tasks!** This month, ask someone else do the work. Direct your insurance agent to review your practice's liability coverage. Ask for premium analysis and coverage options too.
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act turns 27 years old this month.** As your birthday present to the ADA, make sure your practice is up to speed with the anti-discrimination requirements of section 1557 of the ACA.
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August

- During the dog days of summer, many practices find that the appointment schedule is a little slow.** That makes it the perfect time to schedule maintenance on each piece of equipment that requires calibration and servicing.
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September

- Labor Day is upon us.** Complete those employee evaluations before September 30.
 - While you are thinking about those who labor for you, review the Employee Handbook to make sure it is up to date.**
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October

- Since 1922, Fire Prevention Week has been observed on the Sunday through Saturday period in which October 9 falls.** President Woodrow Wilson issued it in remembrance of the Great Chicago Fire on October 9, 1871. Check your fire extinguishers, replace batteries in the smoke alarms, review fire safety with staff, and conduct a fire drill - they are not just for school children. The safety of your patients and staff depend on everyone knowing how to flee to safety in the event of a fire.

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November

- It is end of year chart audit time! Conduct your second and last round of chart audits for the year.** Document what was learned, and what actions you will take, in your Compliance Program.
- The Monday after Thanksgiving is Cyber Monday.** Perhaps you feel slightly exploited by this commercial overreach. Now imagine how badly you would feel if your practice's website resulted in a privacy breach or a legal claim. Update and review the website for any compliance issues before the end of the month.



December

- Santa says, "If you've been good and nice you get a gift this month."** If you have been naughty, you get nothing, or worse — a lump of coal!

So, if you have been good all year, and you completed all the compliance tasks on this calendar, your gift is a month off. But if you have been naughty, it is time to make amends. Go back and catch up on those compliance tasks you missed earlier this year.

If there is anything that the Medical Risk Institute can do to make your Compliance Program, HIPAA issues, or legal matters merry and bright, please contact us. We promise to make risk management as joyful as possible.



Michael J. Sacopulos, JD is an attorney and the founder and president of Medical Risk Institute, a legal firm that provides proactive counsel to the healthcare community. For more than 20 years, Michael has devoted his practice to advising physicians and healthcare organizations. Known for his sharp wit and un-lawyerlike pragmatism, Michael (a.k.a. The Compliance Guy) speaks nationally on compliance, privacy, and other issues facing physicians, and is known for and highly skilled at turning mundane topics into entertaining educational sessions. His full service firm offers health law services, remote Compliance Officer services, and turnkey compliance and HIPAA programs.