



# COMPLIANCE BULLETIN

## HIGHLIGHTS

- HHS is currently conducting HIPAA compliance audits.
- HHS uses email to communicate with HIPAA entities that have been selected for audit.
- HHS issued an alert notifying HIPAA entities about a phishing email purporting to be from OCR, which directs individuals to a non-governmental website.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Carefully review any communications you receive that appear to be from OCR.
- If you are questioning whether an email is legitimate, contact OCR.
- If the email is from OCR, respond promptly in order to meet audit deadlines.

## HHS Warns HIPAA Entities About Phishing Email

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is warning HIPAA covered entities and business associates about a phishing email that disguises itself as an official communication from HHS' Office for Civil Rights (OCR) regarding its HIPAA audit program.

According to OCR's [alert](#), the phishing email appears to be an official government communication, and targets employees of HIPAA covered entities and business associates. The email prompts recipients to click a link regarding possible inclusion in the HIPAA audit program. The link directs individuals to a non-governmental website marketing a firm's cyber security services. This firm is not associated with HHS or OCR.

The phishing email originates from the email address [OSOCRAudit@hhs-gov.us](mailto:OSOCRAudit@hhs-gov.us) and directs individuals to a URL at <http://www.hhs-gov.us>. This is a subtle difference from the official email address for the HIPAA audit program, [OSOCRAudit@hhs.gov](mailto:OSOCRAudit@hhs.gov), but this subtlety is typical in phishing scams.

## ACTION STEPS

Covered entities and business associates should be aware of this issue and take note that official communications regarding the HIPAA audit program are sent from the email address [OSOCRAudit@hhs.gov](mailto:OSOCRAudit@hhs.gov). If you have a question as to whether you have received an official communication from OCR regarding a HIPAA audit, you should contact OCR via email at [OSOCRAudit@hhs.gov](mailto:OSOCRAudit@hhs.gov).

Provided By:

The Insurance Exchange

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