

§ 160.302

§ 160.302 Definitions.

As used in this subpart and subparts D and E of this part, the following terms have the following meanings:

Administrative simplification provision means any requirement or prohibition established by:

(1) 42 U.S.C. 1320d—1320d-4, 1320d-7, and 1320d-8;

(2) Section 264 of Pub. L. 104-191; or

(3) This subchapter.

ALJ means Administrative Law Judge.

Civil money penalty or *penalty* means the amount determined under §160.404 of this part and includes the plural of these terms.

Respondent means a covered entity upon which the Secretary has imposed, or proposes to impose, a civil money penalty.

Violation or *violate* means, as the context may require, failure to comply with an administrative simplification provision.

§ 160.304 Principles for achieving compliance.

(a) *Cooperation.* The Secretary will, to the extent practicable, seek the cooperation of covered entities in obtaining compliance with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

(b) *Assistance.* The Secretary may provide technical assistance to covered entities to help them comply voluntarily with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

§ 160.306 Complaints to the Secretary.

(a) *Right to file a complaint.* A person who believes a covered entity is not complying with the administrative simplification provisions may file a complaint with the Secretary.

(b) *Requirements for filing complaints.* Complaints under this section must meet the following requirements:

(1) A complaint must be filed in writing, either on paper or electronically.

(2) A complaint must name the person that is the subject of the complaint and describe the acts or omissions believed to be in violation of the applicable administrative simplification provision(s).

(3) A complaint must be filed within 180 days of when the complainant knew or should have known that the act or

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omission complained of occurred, unless this time limit is waived by the Secretary for good cause shown.

(4) The Secretary may prescribe additional procedures for the filing of complaints, as well as the place and manner of filing, by notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(c) *Investigation.* The Secretary may investigate complaints filed under this section. Such investigation may include a review of the pertinent policies, procedures, or practices of the covered entity and of the circumstances regarding any alleged violation. At the time of initial written communication with the covered entity about the complaint, the Secretary will describe the act(s) and/or omission(s) that are the basis of the complaint.

§ 160.308 Compliance reviews.

The Secretary may conduct compliance reviews to determine whether covered entities are complying with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

§ 160.310 Responsibilities of covered entities.

(a) *Provide records and compliance reports.* A covered entity must keep such records and submit such compliance reports, in such time and manner and containing such information, as the Secretary may determine to be necessary to enable the Secretary to ascertain whether the covered entity has complied or is complying with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

(b) *Cooperate with complaint investigations and compliance reviews.* A covered entity must cooperate with the Secretary, if the Secretary undertakes an investigation or compliance review of the policies, procedures, or practices of the covered entity to determine whether it is complying with the applicable administrative simplification provisions.

(c) *Permit access to information.* (1) A covered entity must permit access by the Secretary during normal business hours to its facilities, books, records, accounts, and other sources of information, including protected health information, that are pertinent to

ascertaining compliance with the applicable administrative simplification provisions. If the Secretary determines that exigent circumstances exist, such as when documents may be hidden or destroyed, a covered entity must permit access by the Secretary at any time and without notice.

(2) If any information required of a covered entity under this section is in the exclusive possession of any other agency, institution, or person and the other agency, institution, or person fails or refuses to furnish the information, the covered entity must so certify and set forth what efforts it has made to obtain the information.

(3) Protected health information obtained by the Secretary in connection with an investigation or compliance review under this subpart will not be disclosed by the Secretary, except if necessary for ascertaining or enforcing compliance with the applicable administrative simplification provisions, or if otherwise required by law.

§ 160.312 Secretarial action regarding complaints and compliance reviews.

(a) *Resolution when noncompliance is indicated.* (1) If an investigation of a complaint pursuant to § 160.306 or a compliance review pursuant to § 160.308 indicates noncompliance, the Secretary will attempt to reach a resolution of the matter satisfactory to the Secretary by informal means. Informal means may include demonstrated compliance or a completed corrective action plan or other agreement.

(2) If the matter is resolved by informal means, the Secretary will so inform the covered entity and, if the matter arose from a complaint, the complainant, in writing.

(3) If the matter is not resolved by informal means, the Secretary will—

(i) So inform the covered entity and provide the covered entity an opportunity to submit written evidence of any mitigating factors or affirmative defenses for consideration under §§ 160.408 and 160.410 of this part. The covered entity must submit any such evidence to the Secretary within 30 days (computed in the same manner as prescribed under § 160.526 of this part) of receipt of such notification; and

(ii) If, following action pursuant to paragraph (a)(3)(i) of this section, the Secretary finds that a civil money penalty should be imposed, inform the covered entity of such finding in a notice of proposed determination in accordance with § 160.420 of this part.

(b) *Resolution when no violation is found.* If, after an investigation pursuant to § 160.306 or a compliance review pursuant to § 160.308, the Secretary determines that further action is not warranted, the Secretary will so inform the covered entity and, if the matter arose from a complaint, the complainant, in writing.

§ 160.314 Investigational subpoenas and inquiries.

(a) The Secretary may issue subpoenas in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 405(d) and (e), 1320a-7a(j), and 1320d-5 to require the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of any other evidence during an investigation or compliance review pursuant to this part. For purposes of this paragraph, a person other than a natural person is termed an “entity.”

(1) A subpoena issued under this paragraph must—

(i) State the name of the person (including the entity, if applicable) to whom the subpoena is addressed;

(ii) State the statutory authority for the subpoena;

(iii) Indicate the date, time, and place that the testimony will take place;

(iv) Include a reasonably specific description of any documents or items required to be produced; and

(v) If the subpoena is addressed to an entity, describe with reasonable particularity the subject matter on which testimony is required. In that event, the entity must designate one or more natural persons who will testify on its behalf, and must state as to each such person that person's name and address and the matters on which he or she will testify. The designated person must testify as to matters known or reasonably available to the entity.

(2) A subpoena under this section must be served by—

(i) Delivering a copy to the natural person named in the subpoena or to the