

## FYI – Update – October 2008



### **HIPPA Q&A**

The Office of Civil Rights published guidance in the form of Q & A to healthcare providers and consumers regarding HIPPA. Copies of these publications may be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>

### **EPA Audits – Disposal of Unused Medications Planned for 2008**

EPA initiated the study of unused pharmaceutical disposal practices at health care facilities with the goals of understanding one way in which pharmaceuticals enter our waterways and also understanding what factors contribute to pharmaceuticals entering through water. EPA plans to conduct a nationwide survey of hospitals, long-term care facilities, hospices, and veterinary facilities in 2009. EPA will use this information to estimate the amount of unused pharmaceuticals disposed of in our nation's waterways, evaluate current disposal practices and their cost, examine the barriers to alternate disposal methods, and evaluate best management practices and their costs.

### **Safe Lifting and Movement of Nursing Home Residents**

One of the major issues in nursing homes is the frequent heavy lifting and repositioning of residents that exceed the lifting capacity of most caregivers<sup>1</sup>. Numerous studies have shown that training caregivers how to use proper body mechanics to lift residents is not an effective prevention measure because lifting the weight of adult patients is intrinsically unsafe. Research conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Veterans' Health Administration (VHA), and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has shown that safe resident lifting programs that incorporate mechanical lifting equipment can protect workers from injury, reduce workers' compensation costs, and improve the quality of care delivered to residents. This guide also presents a business case to show that the investment in lifting equipment and training can be recovered through reduced workers' compensation expenses and costs associated with lost and restricted work days. Copy of guide published by OSHA may be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-117/>

### **OIG Guidance – NF Compliance Programs**

On 9/30/08, the Federal Register published additional guidance for NF compliance programs. This guidance is a supplement to original NF compliance guidance published in 2002. Guidelines are voluntary but serve to assist nursing facilities in identifying significant risk areas and in evaluating and, as necessary, refining on-going compliance efforts. Areas of discussion include: quality of care; sufficient staffing; comprehensive care plans; medication management; appropriate use of psychotropic medications; resident safety; accurate claims; therapy services; screening of staff; service contracts, etc. Copy of Federal Register may be found at [http://www.access.gpo.gov/su\\_docs/fedreg/a080930c](http://www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a080930c)

### **Flu Season – Time to Educate; Time to Vaccinate**

The flu season is fast approaching and it is time to educate and vaccinate your residents and staff. The CDC has made available free information that is wonderful for teaching your residents, their families, visitors, and your staff. Information may be downloaded at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm>. REMEMBER – In Virginia the reason that F-334 [flu and pneumonia immunization] is cited during a survey is because the organization is unable to demonstrate that the resident/responsible party has been educated in the benefit/risk of the vaccine; demonstration of education must occur each year.

### **Expanding IT Services – adding value and savings for your investment in using CHC services**

CHC has recently made arrangements to host "e-meetings". This system will allow us to participate in a meeting or conduct inservice education without you incurring travel expense. The system is simple; all you need is internet and telephone connection. Training materials will be sent to you in advance for copy and distribution; you bring the team together in front of a computer[s], call in on designated conference call number and we do the rest. You will only be charged for the length of time for the presentation/meeting plus a nominal fee for us hosting the event. If you have question regarding this technology or would like to schedule a meeting or presentation by one of the CHC associates, please contact Mary at 804-355-1943 or [maryltc@verizon.net](mailto:maryltc@verizon.net).

