



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

13 Feb 2012

HEALTH AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER
AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
COMMANDER, JOINT TASK FORCE - NATIONAL CAPITAL
REGION MEDICAL

SUBJECT: Amplifying Guidance Relating to the Reporting of Sentinel Events and Personally
Identifiable Information Breaches to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of
Defense (Health Affairs)

- References:
- (a) Department of Defense (DoD) Instruction 6025.13, "Medical Quality Assurance (MQA) and Clinical Quality Management in the Military Health System"
 - (b) DoD 5400.11-R, "Department of Defense Privacy Program"
 - (c) Office of the Secretary of Defense Memorandum, "Safeguarding Against and Responding to the Breach of Personally Identifiable Information," dated June 5, 2009
 - (d) Assistant Secretary of Defense (Health Affairs) Memorandum, "Reporting a Breach as Defined by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act Provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009," dated April 28, 2010

Reference (a) requires sentinel events that occur in military medical treatment facilities to be reported to my office. References (b), (c), and (d) require notification when a breach of personally identifiable information, including personal health information, occurs. These reports are consistent with the management of the health care system and allow this office and the Department to effectively respond to such incidents. Recently, there have been instances where reporting was delayed to develop the full factual scenario. Although the desire to submit complete reports is understandable, it is also important for me to know of the event's occurrence as soon as possible. Therefore, please ensure that an initial report of the event required by the above references is made in an expeditious manner, but no later than 24 hours of the facility learning of the event. In addition to these events, please keep me informed of any other event that you think I should know about.

For Privacy matters, please continue to adhere to reference (d) which requires that breaches be reported to the TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) Privacy and Civil Liberties

Office (TMA Privacy Office) within 24 hours of discovery. Subsequently, the TMA Privacy Office will notify me of breaches that require my immediate attention.

For sentinel and all other events, please contact COL Lorraine Breen to ensure timely notification at (703) 697-2111, or Lorraine.Breen@ha.osd.mil. Complete reports, as required by the references, can be made at the conclusion of the investigation process when facts are fully developed.

Jonathan Woodson, M.D.

cc:

Surgeon General of the Army
Surgeon General of the Navy
Surgeon General of the Air Force