



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
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To Whom It May Concern:

The HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations took effect April 14, 2003. There may be concern about the reporting of notifiable diseases/conditions by covered entities under the new regulations. Please note that the HIPAA regulations do not prohibit covered entities or their business associates from the reporting of notifiable diseases/conditions to public health authorities. Moreover, reporting of notifiable diseases/conditions does not require covered entities to seek any authorization or documentation from patients indicating that information will be disclosed to public health authorities. Thus, HIPAA does not require any changes in procedures to report notifiable diseases/conditions to public health authorities. Hepatitis B disease, especially disease occurring in expectant mothers, is one such notifiable disease.

Section 164.512 (b)(1)(i) of HIPAA allows disclosure for public health activities to “a public health authority that is authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury, or disability...the conduct of public health surveillance, public health investigations, and public health interventions...”

It is important to note that in Philadelphia, preschool immunizations are included in the category of notifiable conditions.

Thank you for your continued support of our disease surveillance and control efforts.

Sincerely,

Sara Enes Thorpe

Acting Director
Division of Disease Control