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Beware Fraudulent Postcards Disguised as "OCR Communications" Concerning HIPAA

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is warning healthcare entities to beware of phony postcards disguised as official OCR communications concerning HIPAA. These postcards, claiming to be notices of "mandatory HIPAA compliance risk assessment," are **not** from the OCR and are part of the troubling trend of private entities and individuals posing as federal law enforcement to obtain business and/or gain access to sensitive information. For example, OCR previously issued alerts about individuals posing as OCR investigators.

Q: What does this latest "OCR" postcard look like?
A: The postcards have a Washington, D.C. return address, and the sender uses the title "Secretary of Compliance, HIPAA Compliance Division." The postcard is addressed to the healthcare organization's "HIPAA COMPLIANCE OFFICER" and prompts recipients to visit a URL, call, or email to take immediate action on a HIPAA Risk Assessment. (In fact, the link directs individuals to a non-governmental website marketing consulting services.)

Q: How can I verify whether a correspondence is from the OCR?
A: Typically, you can verify that a communication is from OCR by looking for the OCR address or email address on any communication that purports to be from OCR. The addresses for OCR's HQ and Regional Offices are available on the OCR website at https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/about-us/contact-us/index.html, and all OCR email addresses will end in **@hhs.gov**. If organizations have additional questions or concerns, they are encouraged to email OCRMail@hhs.gov.

Q: What should I do if I receive this postcard or a similarly suspicious correspondence?
A: Do **not** visit any URLs or make calls or emails to any of the contact information provided. Do **not** reveal confidential or any sensitive information. Generally, suspected incidents of individuals posing as federal law enforcement should be reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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