

## *HIPAA Security Audit Case Study*

### **Southwest Health Center, Platteville, WI**

Southwest Health Center requested a HIPAA Security Audit from ICE Technologies to ensure they were doing all they could to protect their patients' health information and meet the security requirements of HIPAA.

### **HIPAA Security Audit Process**

ICE has invested heavily in research and development of IT security practices as it relates to HIPAA. The result is ICE's unique HIPAA Security Audit Methodology. The methodology follows the ISO 17799 Information Security Management Audit standard. ICE has incorporated into the ISO standard the HIPAA Security Rule Standards and Implementation Specifications.

The HIPAA Security Audit Methodology Assesses:

- Organizational security policy and practices
- Asset classifications and use policies
- Personnel security policy and practices
- Physical and environmental security elements
- IT operations
- IT access controls
- System back-up and recovery
- Risk analysis

Southwest Health Center was looking for help in the development or validation of security practices. To fulfill this request, ICE provided a comprehensive evaluation and risk assessment of the network infrastructure, physical work environment, and IT policies and procedures.

ICE then presented its findings and recommendations, including an assessment of how well Southwest Health Center was complying with the 42 HIPAA standards, and provided guidance on overcoming shortfalls.

### **Maximizing Limited Resources**

As a rural hospital, Southwest Health Center has limited resources, both human and technological. The information provided by ICE helped pinpoint where to focus energy and resources. Using ICE's report, the facility created a grid laying out what HIPAA requires and where their policies and practices did or did not comply.

They were then able to prioritize which issues could be addressed and where action should be taken. For example, ICE discovered that many of the computers in the facility used the Windows 98 operating system, which is not as secure as the newer versions, and recommended Southwest upgrade those machines.

Like many facilities, Southwest Health Center did not have comprehensive documentation of its policies and procedures. “We were surprised to find that some things that seemed to be common sense, such as logging out of a work station, were not always happening, and we needed to remind our employees of the proper procedures,” said Gary Wood, Southwest Health Center’s manager of patient financial services.

“Every industry has its own nuances,” said Wood. “ICE’s healthcare knowledge and technology skill made us comfortable working with them.”

### **About the Client**

Southwest Health Center is a full service emergent and inpatient care facility located in Platteville, Wisconsin. It has been providing quality healthcare for over 50 years. In March 2005, it opened a new facility – a state of the art building designed to give healthcare workers the best equipment and technologies. It currently has a 25-bed acute care unit, a 10-bed unit for geriatric psychiatric care, and an 84-bed nursing home.

### **About ICE Technologies**

ICE’s team of experienced security experts, systems engineers and healthcare consultants has been assisting community hospitals align technology with the needs of their organization by providing solutions that range from CIO-level advisory services, project management and software selection assistance, to the ongoing administration of healthcare information systems and networks.