

HCCA



HEALTH CARE  
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ASSOCIATION

# COMPLIANCE TODAY

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**Save the Date!**  
**2007**  
**Compliance Institute!**

April 22-25 | Chicago, IL

**Meet Lea Cobb**

Director of Compliance and Policy, HIPAA Privacy Officer  
Erickson Retirement Communities

# Letter from the CEO and the President

## Roy Snell and Dan Roach

As part of our efforts to improve member services, the HCCA leadership has reviewed all of the evaluations submitted by participants at the Annual Institute in Las Vegas in April. Over the coming weeks, we will be responding to some of the more common questions/concerns raised in your comments. These questions include:

### 1. How do you pick the city in which to hold the Institute?

Picking the location for an Institute is a difficult and risky proposition, made more difficult as we grow. In making the decision, the management and board are weighing three important factors - cost, ease of travel, and the ability to accommodate the meeting. The cost analysis includes the cost of getting to and from the conference, hotel room cost, and the cost of staging the conference. The ease of travel analysis includes the time needed to travel to and from the venue and takes into account both flight length and the number of flights in and out of the city to dozens of destinations. The ability to accommodate the number of registrants is also an important consideration.

Unfortunately, when all these factors are considered, there are relatively few cities that work. While New York and San Francisco are easy to get to, they are both prohibitively expensive (close to \$300 per night for hotel

rooms). Other cities have inexpensive rooms, but are more costly to fly to, and may not have hotels large enough to accommodate our meeting. Other cities are more difficult to get to for a large segment of our members (Orlando and San Diego). While not complaining about our growth, the reality is that there are fewer than 10 cities that have hotels with adequate space (unless we want to move to a convention center). In short, there are less than a handful of cities that have the right mix of cost, accessibility, and space.

Both the staff and the board work hard to choose a location and deliver a conference that enables us to cater to a very diverse group of members. Because our conferences are booked at least two and a half years in advance, it is a difficult and somewhat risky proposition. Unfortunately, we will never be able to address the needs of all prospective participants with respect to cost and location. However, we will continue to work diligently to do the very best we can with the constraints and options available.

### 2. What can we do about the size and weight of the conference materials?

We received a significant number of complaints about the size and weight of materials. In fact, we printed millions of pages of handouts for the last Institute, and the HCCA management would love to figure out a way to reduce the volume of materials. Consequently, you will soon be receiving an



invitation to participate in an Internet survey that, among other questions, seeks your input on how to most effectively distribute conference materials to the participants.

### 3. Caesar's Palace ran out of rooms very early last year. What can be done to ensure that more participants get rooms in the conference hotel?

Our 2006 Institute included 400 more participants than in previous years and 800 more participants than we anticipated when we initially booked Caesar's Palace. When we sign a contract with a hotel, we need to agree on a "room block." This means that the HCCA needs to guarantee between 4,000 and 5,000 room nights. If we fail to deliver attendees to fill those rooms, we will be stuck paying the hotel for the value of the unused rooms. Particularly in a post-9/11 era, we have tried to manage this risk by agreeing to room blocks that accommodate approximately 80% of our expected attendance. Unfortunately, when we signed the contract with Caesar's Palace, we did not anticipate the 70% increase in attendance over 3 years.

As soon as it appears that we will have a room shortage, we move rapidly to obtain additional rooms in the conference hotel or adjacent hotels. Depending on what other events are happening in the city and adjacent hotels, this may or may not be possible. One thing you can do to help the HCCA manage this problem more effectively is to make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. Part of the analysis that goes in to selecting

a hotel includes the availability of the right room block and the potential availability of additional rooms in adjacent hotels, if we run out of space in the conference hotel.

**4. Some of the breakout sessions were very crowded last year. What can we do to accommodate larger breakout sessions?**

As noted above, the attendance at the Institute last year was substantially more than we anticipated. While we are pleased with the increased attendance, we concede it causes logistics issues. We are working to increase the size of some of the breakout rooms and to more effectively predict turnout at the sessions. Members can help us by giving us an idea, when registering, which sessions they anticipate attending (you will not be held to your choice, however). ■

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