

HCCA



**HEALTH CARE
COMPLIANCE
ASSOCIATION**

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HCCA's New Board Members



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Letter from the CEO

Roy Snell



The HealthSouth trial has begun

This is a very important moment in the history of the compliance

profession.

Compliance may be expanding in scope and responsibility. Like billing and legal, accounting has had some difficulty policing itself. Like the others, accounting may not welcome oversight by compliance. We will hear once again comments such as, "I got it" and "Compliance does not have the expertise, etc." The question is "Will anyone listen?"

Once again the leadership will have to assess what is missing from the equation and whether compliance can bring "it" to the table. Some will say the problem is related to conflicts of interest rather than a lack of oversight and understanding of the accounting rules.

Does any department have more oversight and standards of behavior than accounting? Who else has annual audits and "Generally Accepted Principles." I personally believe that other than its conflict of interest problem, the accounting profession is a model for the rest of us to follow. Their only problem is that personal gain, power, and pressure can foul up any system.

At this point, I have to believe that some health care boards are wondering "Is any department capable of following the regulations?" "First the legal and billing departments took their eye off the ball and now accounting is having trouble?" You have to believe that this is frustrating for boards. You can't pick up a paper without seeing an accounting scandal.

Now HealthSouth is demonstrating that health care is not

immune to accounting scandals. Oh.... the humanity!

No department has more systems, procedures and controls than accounting. Boards have to be incredulous. We have annual audits, controls, generally accepted

accounting procedures, and we are still having problems.

Many of the accounting problems come to light as a result of a whistleblower who tried to get someone's attention. Fifteen people have pleaded guilty in the HealthSouth case. Many must have known that something was wrong, but could not or would not stop it. Boards have to believe that there is a problem with independence. Someone wants the numbers to look good as opposed to being accurate. ■

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