

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
CATHOLIC CHAPLAINS

March 3, 2003

Dear Colleagues,

The members of the Council on Collaboration, which includes the Presidents of the five major national pastoral care, counseling, and education organizations in the United States, have drafted a letter to the administrators of all the health care institutions in the country which will hopefully provide clarity around the intent of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act's (HIPAA) Final Privacy Rule.

Part of the intent of the Final Privacy Rule is to keep confidential the patient's religious preference if that is the wish of the patient. The wording of the Rule does not offer a clear distinction between "Area Clergy" and "Professional Chaplain." The attached letter addressed to hospital administrators clearly differentiates between the two and clearly states that Board Certified Chaplains, (including ACPE Supervisors and CPE Students) are a part of the professional health care team and therefore not included in the statements applying to Area Clergy.

**This letter is being sent to all board certified chaplains and CPE supervisors of the APC, ACPE, NAJC and NACC. It is our suggestion that you take this letter with you to your administrator and utilize this opportunity to clarify this important distinction between board certified chaplains, the CPE supervisors and local clergy.**

As professionals, it is important you personally take the initiative to understand the content of the Privacy Rule and be able to clearly articulate the intent of the Rule. Our letter is a concrete way of supporting you in this effort in advocacy. As these rules become more and more restrictive, it is imperative we keep ourselves educated to ensure our very important role in the healing of patients is not impeded.

Blessings to all of you for your good work!

Sincerely,

NACC Representatives  
Council on Collaboration:

Ms. Monica Anderson  
Providence Health System  
St. Vincent's Medical Center  
Portland, Oregon

Br. Felipe Martinez, fsp  
St. Vincent Medical Center  
Los Angeles, California

Rev. Joseph J. Driscoll  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
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