

# Kern County Administrative Office



County Administrative Center  
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May 5, 2009

Board of Supervisors  
Kern County Administrative Center  
1115 Truxtun Avenue  
Bakersfield, CA 93301

## **DESIGNATION OF COUNTY HIPAA PRIVACY OFFICER**

**Fiscal Impact: None**

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) applies to all entities that use, generate or process health information and includes rules to assure that patient information remains private. All covered entities must comply with the regulations regarding the protection of personal health information. Three County departments are covered by HIPAA: Kern Medical Center, and the Mental Health and Public Health Departments. As the administrator of the County health plan, the County Administrative Office also comes under the jurisdiction of HIPAA.

HIPAA also requires that a covered entity name one individual to be the Privacy Officer for the entity. While each of the covered County departments have privacy officials, the law requires one central public contact for HIPAA-related privacy issues. The Board initially designated a County Privacy Officer on August 5, 2003, who has since left County service. Thus, to assure legal compliance with HIPAA, it is appropriate for the Board to designate a replacement Privacy Officer for the County. Because one of the functions of the County Compliance and Accountability Officer is general oversight, it is recommended that the incumbent, Carl R. Breining, be designated as the County HIPAA Privacy Officer.

Therefore, IT IS RECOMMENDED that your Board designate Carl R. Breining as the County HIPAA Privacy Officer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elissa D. Ladd".

Elissa D. Ladd  
Interim County Administrative Officer

EDL:CRB:ADM\_HIPAA\_OFFICER

cc: All Department Heads