

FOREWORD

When I became the Vice President of Legal & Governmental Affairs at the Louisiana Hospital Association in 1986, I quickly realized that I was expected to be the primary legal and legislative resource for the health information professionals in our member hospitals. Over the next eight years, I learned a great deal. Since entering private practice in 1994, I have been fortunate enough to continue to work with the profession, and my education has continued. Also, during those two phases of my healthcare legal career the Louisiana Legislature has re-written much of the applicable law (sometimes several times), and I was involved with all of those efforts.

I also began to speak regularly on medical records issues, first as a legislative update and later on general legal topics. Over the years, my handout was refined and expanded until I realized that I had written most of a book. This is the ninth edition of that manual. It remains very much a work in progress, and I sincerely welcome your comments and criticisms.

Regarding the organization, I have tried to create a structure that is both logical and will accommodate all relevant federal material. This volume contains the major federal regulations, but the plan is to eventually create a companion federal volume using the same outline. In that way, readers will be able to quickly and easily check for both state and federal sources on a topic. Utility has always been the ultimate goal of this project.

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