



**** PRESS RELEASE ****

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Michael Semel, President – Chemung Computer
mike@chemung.com
Phone: (607) 733-8550 x 117 or (800) 488-4877 x 117
Web: www.chemung.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHEMUNG COMPUTER EARNS HIPAA CERTIFICATIONS

(ELMIRA, August 21, 2003) – Chemung Computer, a local technology solutions provider, has developed a HIPAA consulting practice that will complement the service offerings it provides to healthcare clients. This new practice will assist HIPAA Covered Entities in becoming HIPAA compliant as required by the recent privacy law that went into effect on April 14th of this year. By 2005, healthcare organizations must meet strict guidelines requiring the security, availability, and integrity of patient information stored on computers. Chemung Computer offers network assessment and gap analysis; Information Technology policy and procedure development; and ongoing services to help ensure that a healthcare client remains compliant.

HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) is a law that, among other things, standardizes computer transactions and requires the Healthcare industry to guard the privacy and security of patient data. This was made law in 1996 but due to the law's complexities, enforcement and compliance is only now being required within the 2003-2005 time frame. This new regulation basically affects the entire Healthcare industry including doctors, dentists, chiropractors, pharmacists, nursing homes, hospitals, medical equipment suppliers, counselors, medical billing firms, insurance firms, HMOs, and most PPOs.

Chemung Computer's Rose Ketchum and Michael Semel, are both Certified HIPAA Administrators (CHA) as accredited by the HIPAA Academy. This certification validates the



knowledge and skills required for delivery and support of health care services and administration as it relates to the new HIPAA regulations.

“HIPAA is a very challenging regulatory requirement that affects almost all aspects of a healthcare business. Some healthcare organizations think that their software and hardware will make them HIPAA compliant. However, it is *how the organization implements and manages privacy and security* that will determine if they are compliant,” said Michael Semel, President of Chemung Computer. “The risk of lawsuits, and the fines for non-compliance, can be substantial and we feel it’s our business to understand how this regulation can and will affect the operations of our clients.” Fines can run from \$100 for a simple civil violation up to \$250,000 and ten years imprisonment for a criminal violation.

Rose Ketchum, Vice President of Chemung Computer, states the ramifications of this regulation can be very complex and there are many misunderstandings regarding this regulation. “We’ve made a commitment and investment to understanding how HIPAA impacts our healthcare clientele.” said Ketchum.

Darren McBride, President of Sierra Computers & Training in Reno, Nevada, is a HIPAA Academy certified instructor. McBride said, “We are seeing more progressive computer professionals take the lead in learning about HIPAA and earning certifications to prove it. Firms such as Chemung Computer are on the leading edge of this trend. They are one of only a handful of IT firms in the nation who have gone through this rigorous HIPAA certification process.”

According to McBride, Chemung Computer is a natural to provide this kind of service because they already have the in-house expertise to provide network security services. “The ability to comply with the federal HIPAA law in a cost effective manner and protect patient medical data will be crucial to the success of anyone in the medical industry in the coming years.” said McBride.



Although many in the medical community see HIPAA as an unfunded mandate, Semel says that it actually reflects a lot of good business practices. “Things such as reviewing network security, documenting backup procedures, and formalizing disaster preparedness are good ideas. They represent things that many of us know we should do but somehow never get around to. By hiring an independent firm to assist with this HIPAA preparation and documentation, it gets done. We expect that 7 out of every ten firms will earn back the money spent on network security within the first 2 years. These savings will come in the form of lower support costs due to better network documentation, the ability to recover from costly data loss, better employee training and retention, and in avoiding costly lawsuits.”

HIPAA requires that any organization that transmits patient information electronically, or pays another organization to do the same, be compliant with the new regulations; commonly referred to as a ‘covered entity.’ Chemung Computer provides companies with consultation to help them determine if they are a ‘covered entity’ and assess the measures required to be in compliance. For more information contact Chemung Computer at (607) 733-8550 or (800) 488-4877.

###

About Chemung Computer

Chemung Computer is a technology solution provider with offices in Elmira Heights specializing in IT consulting, network services, Internet security and managed services. Founded in 1980, Chemung Computer has been one of the area’s most reputable and established IT firms.

Chemung Computer provides value-added systems consulting services that allow clients to maximize their technology investments. The company continually invests in technical training for employees to stay on top of emerging technologies. Chemung Computer’s partnerships offer clients the opportunity to leverage skill sets and knowledge directly from manufacturers. For more information on Chemung Computer, contact Rose Ketchum at 607-733-8550 x 114 or visit their Web site at www.chemung.com.



About HIPAA Academy

The HIPAA Academy is an independent training and certification firm that exclusively develops and validates professionals' HIPAA knowledge. The training program is designed to deliver the skills required for Certified HIPAA Professionals, Security Specialists and Administrators to be effective members of enterprise HIPAA implementation initiatives.

HIPAA Academy delivers solutions to assist organizations with their HIPAA initiatives in the areas of HIPAA Professional Services, HIPAA Assessment, Interim HIPAA Compliance Officer, HIPAA Project Managers and HIPAA Training and Certification.

Access www.HIPAAacademy.net for more details about HIPAA Academy and additional resources such as frequently-asked-questions and white papers.

About Sierra Computers & Training

Sierra Computers & Training is an independent technology firm based in Reno, NV that specializes in healthcare solutions and services for the healthcare industry. For further information contact the owner and President, Darren McBride, at 775-322-6455 x107 or via e-mail at Darren@sierracat.com

Mr. McBride and Sierra Computers have been quoted recently in several national publications in relation to HIPAA including:

- *Channel Web*, a CMP publication at <http://vb.channelsupersearch.com/news/var/42613.asp>
- And, *USA Today* at http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/technology/2003-06-08-hippa_x.htm