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**Approaching Final Deadline of 5/29/03 Drives Health Industry Leaders  
To Register To Use New HIPAA-Compliant Codes**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM. May 27, 2003. To avoid losing access to ABC codes for electronic healthcare transactions, thousands of health industry organizations and practitioners are registering at [www.alternativelink.com](http://www.alternativelink.com) as potential code set users and evaluators. Those that have already registered—but have not yet indicated their desired categories of HIPAA trading partners for ABC codes—are returning to this web site in accordance with a new government mandate for registrants.

According to Health and Human Services (HHS), those who want to secure their rights to commercially use or evaluate ABC codes in HIPAA transactions must register and report trading partner preferences before May 29, 2003. Those who fail to register and provide this information before this official cutoff date will lose their rights to code set use over the next two years. Registration is complimentary (no charge), preserves access to ABC codes for qualified HIPAA transactions, and takes less than 15 minutes.

Among those already registered and/or already using ABC codes are

- top 20 and other commercial health plans;
- leading Medicare Plus Choice, Medicaid and military health plans;
- healthcare provider organizations, such as hospital systems, subacute care facilities, preferred provider organizations and independent practice associations;
- administrative and claims-related businesses;
- fully and self-insured employers;
- academic institutions with integrative healthcare programs;
- software developers in both the healthcare and automotive/personal injury industries; and
- thousands of alternative medicine, nursing and other integrative healthcare practitioners.

This past January, HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson authorized commercial use and evaluation of ABC codes under HIPAA, as a proposed modification to the HIPAA transaction and code set standards. ABC codes were designed to fill gaps and balance the medical orientation in the nation's older code sets. Used in conjunction with CPT and HCPCS II codes, ABC codes are expected to improve healthcare research, management and commerce. As they help capture data on the financing, administration and delivery of care, ABC codes will facilitate direct comparisons of the cost-effectiveness of conventional, complementary and alternative medicine. This will give policymakers a more complete and accurate picture of what does and does not work in the U.S. healthcare system, to support health and medical policy improvements.

Alternative Link ([www.alternativelink.com](http://www.alternativelink.com)) pioneered ABC codes and delivers information products and consulting services that help health-promoting organizations and practitioners finance, administer and deliver cost-effective care that improves individual health, industry efficiencies and socioeconomic development. The Company develops the codes in collaboration with a non-profit organization, The Foundation for Integrative Healthcare (FIHC). FIHC ([www.fihc.org](http://www.fihc.org)) manages information on the characteristics and outcomes of care to help health-promoting organizations and practitioners make rational decisions that improve individual health, industry efficiencies and socioeconomic development.



Information about ABC codes and their use under HIPAA can be obtained at 410.786.4160 (Eastern Time) through the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Office of HIPAA Standards.

Transcripts and downloads from the National Committee on Vital and Health Statistics' review of ABC codes are available at [www.ncvhs.hhs.gov](http://www.ncvhs.hhs.gov) for the April 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, May 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, September 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> and December 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> hearings of 2002, as well as the January 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, March 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> and May 20<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> hearings of 2003.

ABC coding experts can be reached by emailing [userregistration@alternativelink.com](mailto:userregistration@alternativelink.com).

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