

South Texas
**Veterans
Health Care
System**

Department of Veterans Affairs



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VA ANNOUNCES FULL COMPLIANCE WITH HITECH ACT TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENTS
Eligible Veterans Have Received Information in Mail

SAN ANTONIO – April 16, 2010 – The Department of Veterans Affairs is responding to the requirements in the new Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH Act). The HITECH Act is part of The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, which is also referred to as the Stimulus Bill.

VA's South Texas Veterans Health Care System learned on October 7, 2009 that VA staff noticed 2 inches of documents missing from a binder in the file room. An investigation concluded that the documents most likely were shredded, but that could not be confirmed. There is no reason to believe any malicious activity has resulted from this incident.

Arrangements have been made with Equifax Personal Solutions to help protect these Veterans' identities and their credit information at no cost for one year. Eligible Veterans have received a letter and promotion code in the mail back in October 2009

In accordance with the HITECH Act, VA is providing this press release and will be publishing this breach on the Health & Human Services (HHS) website. The HITECH Act requires HIPAA covered entities to send press releases on all breaches affecting 500 or more individuals which have occurred since September 23, 2009.

South Texas Veterans Health Care System provides training to all employees and holds them accountable for their actions through disciplinary action. Veterans can rest assured that South Texas is constantly improving systems designed to protect their private information. VA is committed to protecting Veterans, their families and our employees, and we are constantly reviewing our processes to provide better, safer and faster care for our Veterans.