

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
7500 Security Boulevard, Mail Stop N3-13-27  
Baltimore, Maryland 21244-1850



**OFFICE OF INFORMATION SERVICES**

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**CIO DIRECTIVE 08-02**

**DATE:** July 23, 2008

**TO:** CMS Center/Office Directors and Regional Administrators

**FROM:** Julie Boughn /s/  
CMS Chief Information Officer (CIO) &  
Director, Office of Information Services (OIS)

**SUBJECT:** CIO Directive 08-02 - Utilization of Webinar Technology at CMS--  
**INFORMATION**

Several months ago we surveyed each component for information on whether there was a need within the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for a product capable of conducting web-based meetings or training. Virtually every component indicated that they would be interested in a product of this type. Since those responses were provided to us, OIS personnel have been actively working to enable this capability. We have arranged for a trial copy of the Adobe Connect software product for use by the Office of Operations Management (OOM) to support as a pilot project the Performance Management Appraisal Program training. We expect this training will be conducted using Adobe Connect starting in July. We are also actively seeking end of year funding to procure Webinar software for the agency that would allow CMS to offer similar training to employees and contractors on an ongoing basis.

These efforts, however, only address part of the technological issues facing CMS. Agency sponsored Webinars such as the Adobe sessions mentioned above generally constitute less risk for CMS than do Webinars sponsored by external organizations, yet there is significant demand for these training opportunities sponsored by the external organizations such as vendors and training establishments. Every day CMS employees are solicited to attend training sessions from many sources; including the vendors we do business with, our business partners, and other government and private sector organizations. OIS personnel have been responding to inquiries from employees throughout the agency about attendance at these events for quite some time and the number of requests continues to increase.

We have turned down most of these requests because of the security concerns that exist with the use of this software. The primary security problem is that most products of this type allow for remote control of the student's desktop by the instructor. Once the instructor has that control, they have full access to all data on the employee's hard drive as well as access to any shared drives the employee can access. While it is true that the instructor can not gain remote control of the desktop without the permission of the student, we are concerned that such permission might be easily obtained, particularly if CMS employees or contractors are not aware of this security issue. This issue poses a potentially serious risk, but we believe that it can be mitigated through employee education and awareness. We request your support on communicating the following precautions to your staff and contractors when using this technology.

- Do not allow remote control or sharing of their desktop to anyone for any reason while attending Webinar training, even if requested to do so by the sponsoring organization.
- Do not attempt to install software on your personal computer to enable a Webinar session. If software is required, contact the CMS IT Service Desk at [CMS.IT.Service.Desk@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:CMS.IT.Service.Desk@cms.hhs.gov) or by calling 410-786-2580.
- If access to the website hosting the training is blocked contact the CMS IT Service Desk to open a ticket to have the site reviewed and, if appropriate, unblocked.
- In the event an employee believes their workstation has been compromised as a result of a Webinar session they must contact the CMS IT Service Desk.

We also will provide additional information on this topic in the security refresher training that all CMS employees must complete each year.

With observance of these precautions, the most serious security risks posed by these products can be mitigated. As a result, I have decided to allow CMS employees to participate in Webinar training offered by outside organizations if such training is work related. Employees should receive concurrence from their supervisors before participating in work related Webinar training.

I ask your support in disseminating this CIO Directive to your staff and reinforcement of the precautions described above.

If you have questions or require additional information, for technical issues please contact Ray Pfeifer, Senior Technical Advisor, Enterprise Data Center Group at [Raymond.Pfeifer@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Raymond.Pfeifer@cms.hhs.gov) or (410) 786-2619. Questions regarding CMS policy with respect to remote access and file sharing should be referred to Cyndy Anderson, Director, Division of IT Policies, Procedures and Audits, at [Cynthia.Anderson@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Anderson@cms.hhs.gov) or (410) 786-5841.

cc:

Charlene Frizzera, CoO

Michelle Snyder, Deputy CoO