



JAN 11 2008

## MEMORANDUM

To: OPDIV and STAFFDIV Heads

From: *Joe W. Ellis* Joe W. Ellis, Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management  
Dr. Margaret Giannini, Director, Office on Disability  
Kevin Schweers, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs

*Kevin Schweers*  
*Margaret Giannini*  
*Joe W. Ellis*

Subject: Section 508 Compliance – Web Sites and Broadcast Email

Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that the Federal Government make its electronic and information technology, including Web sites, email, and content delivered by either, accessible to people with disabilities. This law has been in effect since 2001.

HHS is committed to being a leader in making our information fully and freely available to members of the public and employees with disabilities.

The Department, through the Office of the General Counsel, has recently received letters from an advocacy organization that raise issues regarding Section 508 compliance on HHS Web sites. The letters include the results of 508 compliance surveys of a number of OPDIV and OS Web sites.

Prudence Goforth, Director of the Web Communications and New Media Division (WCD), will coordinate a Departmental response to the accessibility issues that have been raised in these letters. That response is due by January 30, 2008.

The WCD, with support by the Office on Disability, is developing a phased plan for Departmental 508 compliance. This plan, to be disseminated to all Operating and Staff Divisions by January 30<sup>th</sup>, will outline specific actions the Department will take to meet the Section 508 compliance mandate.

The issues raised by the letters underscore the need to ensure the fullest possible accessibility of our Web and email communications. Bottom line:

**All Web sites, both public facing and internal, must be Section 508 compliant in their entirety.**

All Web sites and all documents and files hosted on those Web sites -- including text, tables, graphics, audio and video -- at the time they are posted, must meet Section 508 standards and be fully available to people with disabilities.

**All broadcast emails (i.e., emails sent to large groups of people) -- internal or external -- and their attachments must also be Section 508 compliant.**

At the time they are sent, emails with graphics, invitations, PDF attachments, and/or links to audio and video must meet Section 508 standards and be fully available to people with disabilities.

Compliance with Section 508 must be factored into all deadlines involving either the creation of new Web sites or content or the production of reports, records, documents, notices, videos or other files that will be placed on any HHS Web site. This applies to emergency incident information, as this information is often of critical relevance to persons with disabilities.

Along with the Department's compliance plan, OPDIVs and STAFFDIVs will also receive copies of the documents provided by the advocacy organization. Please do not contact the organization directly. There will be one coordinated Departmental response to come from the WCD.

We know that many of you have activities underway to address Section 508 Web site compliance, and we ask that you send a list of those activities to Prudence Goforth by January 16, 2008. This will help inform our guidance across the Department. Your OPDIV Section 508 official should have this information available.

If you have specific questions, please email Prudence Goforth at: [prudence.goforth@hhs.gov](mailto:prudence.goforth@hhs.gov) . Thank you in advance for your assistance in achieving full HHS compliance with Section 508 requirements.

Enclosure: List of OPDIV 508 Officials

cc: Public Affairs Directors  
Web Council and Representatives  
Section 508 Program Team

**Department of Health & Human Services 508 Officials**  
**As of 10 Jan 07**

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