



For Immediate Release

**For information, contact Cheri Dunkleberger
at 505.875.0001 (MST), or
cheri.dunkleberger@alternativelink.com**

**REGISTRATIONS SOAR WITH ELEVEN DAYS REMAINING
TO SECURE RIGHTS TO USE ABC CODES IN HIPAA TRANSACTIONS**

ALBUQUERQUE, NM. March 5, 2003. Health industry businesses and practitioners have until March 16, 2003, to register for rights to use ABC codes in HIPAA transactions. Those that do not register will be locked out of code use in these transactions for two years, according to a Health and Human Services (HHS) mandate.

Registrations are soaring as organizations and individuals across the healthcare continuum prepare to implement the codes in healthcare research, management and commerce applications. Current code set users and brand new registrants include HIPAA trading partners, business associates and vendors such as software application developers and information technology companies; administrative and claims-related businesses; Medicare/Medicaid and private health plans; provider organizations; conventional, complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practitioners; government agencies; employers and academic institutions with CAM programs.

ABC codes reflect growing consumer demand for services offered by over three million licensed healthcare practitioners, other than conventional physicians. By describing alternative medicine, nursing and other integrative healthcare practices, the codes plug gaps in the American Medical Association's CPT codes and the government's HCPCS Level II codes. HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson authorized commercial use and evaluation of ABC codes as an exception and proposed modification to HIPAA transaction and code set standards.

Registration for using ABC codes is free at www.alternativelink.com and takes less than ten minutes. It includes an opinion poll that fulfills registrant obligations under the HIPAA exception. Once enrolled, registrants can opt in or out of code set use and evaluation, as they see fit.

ABC codes are maintained by The Foundation for Integrative Healthcare, a non-profit organization, and Alternative Link, a privately-held New Mexico company. The Foundation for Integrative Healthcare (www.fihc.org) manages information on the characteristics and outcomes of care to help health industry organizations and practitioners make rational decisions that improve public health, industry efficiencies and socioeconomic development.

Alternative Link (www.alternativelink.com) delivers information products and consulting services that help health industry organizations and practitioners improve public health, business efficiencies and socioeconomic development.

Individuals and organizations can secure rights to use ABC codes in HIPAA transactions by registering at www.alternativelink.com by March 16, 2003.