

Susan C. Atkinson
Counsel | Atlanta

Susan Atkinson is a Counsel in the Healthcare Practice of Smith, Gambrell & Russell, LLP.

Ms. Atkinson's practice is dedicated to advising health care industry clients on a wide range of corporate, regulatory, and compliance matters. As former Corporate Counsel for Saint Joseph's Health System (now Emory/St. Joseph's), Ms. Atkinson advised the CEO, other senior managers, the Chief of the Medical Staff, and the Boards of one of the nation's top acute care hospitals and its affiliated real estate and management entities, employed physician group, charitable foundation, and indigent care program. Among her other duties, Ms. Atkinson guided the creation and implementation of the Health System's initial compliance program (including serving as counsel to the Compliance Committee) and initial HIPAA policies and procedures, served as a member of and counsel to the Institutional Review Board, and advised on Saint Joseph's gainsharing program, the first in the country to receive Advisory Opinion approval from the OIG (AO 01-1).

Throughout her career, Ms. Atkinson has advised hospitals, health systems, long term care facilities, sleep centers, ambulatory surgery centers, pharmacies, DME suppliers, FQHCs, health care management companies, and physician practices of every size on corporate governance; peer review matters; physician recruitment; mid-level provider protocols; policy creation and implementation; joint ventures; informed consent; "do not resuscitate" orders and other end-of-life issues; operational compliance with the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services; EMTALA; managed care; 340(b) and compounding pharmacy matters; and interactions with investigators, research institutions, industry sponsors, and the NIH/National Cancer Institute for the conduct of pre- and post-market drug, and medical device clinical trials. She is the former Chief Compliance Officer for a group of approximately 40 cardiologists, and she was the primary drafter of the Medical Association of Georgia's Model Medical Staff Bylaws. Ms. Atkinson has also regularly advised on structuring transactions within the requirements of the Stark Law, Anti-Kickback Law, and requirements applicable to tax-exempt organizations; mergers, acquisitions, and affiliations (including



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Areas of Practice

Healthcare
Corporate Law
Tax Exempt Organizations
Cannabis Law

Admissions

Georgia

Memberships

State Bar of Georgia
(Health Law)
Georgia Academy of
Healthcare Attorneys
American Bar Association
(Health Law)
American Health Lawyers
Association
Atlanta Bar Foundation

regulatory diligence on compliance with licensure and Medicare provider enrollment requirements); health care franchising; tax-exempt financing; Certificates of Need, Letters of Non-Reviewability, and related administrative appeal hearings; state licensing board matters; and complex reimbursement issues (including Medicare and Medicaid appeals and self-disclosure protocols). She has also worked extensively on HIPAA privacy and security matters (including risk assessments, policy development, facility audits, and training), and she advised a Fortune 500 communications company on development of its telehealth platform.

(Lifetime Fellow)

Ms. Atkinson graduated magna cum laude from the University of Georgia with a degree in Music Education (voice). She was a member of Sigma Alpha Iota, University Theatre, University Judiciary (Judicial Council), Phi Kappa Phi, and Mortar Board, and she toured Georgia and the Southeast as a member of the Concert Choir and the Redcoat Band. Ms. Atkinson received her law degree from the University of Georgia School of Law, where she was a Castellow Scholar and served on the Editorial Board of the Georgia Law Review, which also chose for publication her Note, Medicare Cost Containment and Home Health Care: Potential Liability for Physicians and Hospitals.

Ms. Atkinson is a member of the State Bar of Georgia (Health Law), the Georgia Academy of Healthcare Attorneys, the American Bar Association (Health Law), and the American Health Lawyers Association. She has been actively involved since 2005 in leadership roles with the Atlanta Bar Association's "A Courthouse Line" productions (a series of all-attorney musicals which are the major fundraiser for the Atlanta Bar Foundation's charitable programs), and she is a Lifetime Fellow of the Atlanta Bar Foundation. Ms. Atkinson has also been active in the Atlanta arts community, serving on the Board of Directors of Atlanta Lyric Theatre for 9 years (5 as Chair); on the current Board of Directors for OnStage Atlanta; as assistant director and committed parent volunteer for music and theatre programs at The Children's School, Decatur High School, and Atlanta International School; as a church musician; and as a working performer in local and regional choral, musical theatre, and cabaret performances.