H I P A A

Information Systems Security Solutions for HIPAA Compliance

How TechServices.Us Can Help

This paper primarily deals with §142.308(c) and §142.308(d) of the HIPAA Act. Amended to § 164.304 -6 and §164.310-12 These sections deal with the technical security of patient information, and can be a difficult section to understand and find solutions to.

HIPAA (The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) was enacted to establish guidelines within the health care industry to ensure the privacy of patients and the physical and technical security of their medical records.

A Matter of Size

The health care industry is a large arena where many different players have to work together to serve the needs of their patients. No matter the size or organizational structure, all parties involved must follow the rules set forth by HIPAA to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the patient's records and information. In this arena **it is the smaller practices, the smaller health plans, and community hospitals that have the greatest need for information on a cost-effective basis to stay in the game. Therefore, this paper will focus on the needs of smaller businesses and private practices,** and not the large HMOs and medical conglomerates.

Family Clinic" has to find a way for the **files to be encrypted during the transfer from the office to the backup server, and has to have an internal audit of the transfer.** Finally, these files must be readily accessible by any of the offices in the practice. This poses quite a problem, since the office only has a regular (unsecure) internet connection between the offices and the server.

Remote access between offices and the backup server

Since the two offices in *"Dr. Powers Family Clinic"* are located on opposite sides of the the city, they need a way to quickly pass patient information back and forth

of data can be accessed quickly, securely, and by the entity who is authorized to access a given type of information.

Real Solutions

These problems are only a part of the Security Standards of the HIPAA regulations, **but they illustrate a need for technical services and software that is both flexible and affordable for the small to mid-size practice within the medical services field.** www.Techservices Corp provides these solutions, and can help remove the technical obstacles that arose due to HIPAA regulations.

Important!! The penalties for wrongful disclosure of PHI under the Privacy rule are steep: Fines and/or imprisonment for up to 1 year for <u>unintentional</u> violations

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Real Problems

In this paper, we will look at the business needs of *"Dr. Powers Family Clinic".* Seeing to all of the security standards as mandated by HIPAA and documenting the procedures for the physical security of the office, is a time consuming task. Even computer savvy practices, have trouble finding cost effective solutions for key parts of the requirement. **www.Techservices Corp has the IT solutions for HIPAA compliance.**

Off-site back up and storage

"Dr. Powers Family Clinic" needs a way to electronically back up and archive all patient records for the practice. **The back up server needs to be in a location separate from the physical files** and the server for each individual office. Furthermore, *"Dr. Powers*

between the sites, To do this, they need something that will encrypt the data, force user authentication and create an audit trail for all transactions. User authentication means making sure that the person who is accessing the secure data is who he says he is, and is authorized to access that data. This procedure and application would also be the main means of accessing the data on the backup server from remote locations.

Access control for all electronic information

In the office, there are different types of data that has to be accessed by the office personnel. Some are authorized to handle only billing and insurance information, while others need to access the complete medical records for patients. The clinic must figure out a way to establish controls so that the different types

SSL encryption

Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) is a way to make a secure connection from a client to a server with SSL capabilities. When a secure connection is established, data and commands passing back and forth will be encrypted and can only be decrypted by the parties involved in the transfer. **By using 128 bit encryption (the highest level of security used by on-line banks and E-commerce web sites)**, you are assured that no third parties can intercept and breach your private records. **

Internal Audits

A key part of HIPAA compliance involves audits of who accessed what data, and when. Using a logging system, all events are recorded and **a daily activity log can provide comprehensive analysis of transferred data.**

Existing Software

Many professional practices have substantial investments in their existing software and have recently upgraded their software to comply with HIPAA electronic billing requirements. However, **your current patient billing and records software doesn't address the need for an overall IT office policy and practice that will assure full compliance with HIPAA secure data regulations.**

Evaluation and Consultation

Like a patient, **your current computer system needs to be evaluated to determine what measures are necessary in order for you to ensure only authorized access to protected data.** www.Techservices Corp will examine your current hardware and software configuration, analyze your risk assessment, recommend and implement the necessary adjustments, and provide the additional software and services you need to become HIPAA compliant.

Benefits

Implementation of leading edge technology provides valuable capabilities previously unavailable. Secure, remote access, through the internet, can retrieve patient records to your laptop while at the hospital or anywhere, and check information from your office. Most importantly, you'll know that confidential information is securely protected. Custom solutions are available, tailored to your security, risk, and budgetary concerns.

Valuable Information

Receive a free guide to HIPAA compliance including sample forms and information that you can customize for your practice.

The Final Rule

The Federal Register

45 CFR Parts 160, 162, and 164 Health Insurance Reform: Security Standards; Final Rule

This document is available on the internet and is also included in our free guide. Concerning your information system, you must do something and document your efforts. The actual programs, encryption levels, passwords and procedures, etc, that you use are left open to your discretion. Many security safeguards are already built in to your computers and some tweaks and upgrades may be all that are necessary to secure your data.

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** The federal government has not mandated any particular technology or encryption level. It is the duty of each covered entity to act responsibly in this regard

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