



HIPAA: The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

Understanding HIPAA is an integral part of working in any medical setting. While HIPAA regulates virtually every aspect of the healthcare experience as a whole in America (health insurance coverage, paid/guaranteed leave, FMLA, etc.), the most relevant part of the Act for an interpreter is the Privacy Rule.

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, The Privacy Rule (also known as the *Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information*) sets national standards for the protection of health and patient information. The rule applies to anyone with access to Protected Health Information.

Protected Health Information (PHI) covers all details that could be used to identify a patient. In addition to name, address, birth date, demographics, and social security number, PHI includes:

- An individual's past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition
- The provision of health care to the individual
- The past, present, or future payment for the provision of healthcare

So how do I use HIPAA on a daily basis?

The goal of the Privacy Rule is to protect patient information and confidentiality. To limit the risk of non-compliance, simply avoid:

- Discussing patient details (PHI) with anyone other than the clinical staff directly involved with the patient. If you need to disclose confidential information, be sure that there is no one else in the room and that the door is closed.
- Using a patient's full name in unprotected e-mails or public phone calls. Tip: When in doubt, use a patient's initials or case number. Phone calls regarding patients are best made in private, but if that's not possible, using patient initials is the next best course of action.
- Throwing away any paper that includes PHI (for example: work orders/contracts, as they contain the patient's name). These documents should go into a secure, HIPAA compliant shredder.

If you have any questions about whether information is protected under HIPAA or you need to report a significant detail and you're not sure if it's confidential, err on the side of caution. Speak with the clinician directly responsible for your patient's case in a private room with a closed door. Ideally, no information about your patient(s) should ever be discussed outside of their medical appointment.

Proprietary and Confidential Information of Global Arena

Headquarters

100 S. Broad St., Ste. 1400
Philadelphia, PA 19110

Mid-Atlantic

3477 Corporate Pkwy., Ste. 100
Center Valley, PA 18034

Pacific Northwest

4705 NE 139th St.
Vancouver, WA 98686

New England

11 South Angell St., #398
Providence, RI 02906