

# HIPAA TOOLS

## HIPAA Implementation Tools made available by Vendors and Associations

### WHAT IS HIPAA?

- The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, P.L. 104-191 (HIPAA) was signed into law on August 21, 1996 by President Clinton.
- The law's primary objectives are to:
  - \* Ensure health insurance portability
  - \* Reduce healthcare fraud and abuse
  - \* Guarantee security and privacy of healthcare information
  - \* Enforce standards for health information

### KEY COMPONENTS OF HIPAA:

- Information Security Requirements
- Privacy Standards
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
- Unique Identifiers
  - \* Provider Identifier
  - \* Health Plan Identifier
  - \* National Employer Identifier
  - \* Patient Identifier

### HIPAA TIMEGUIDES:

- Standards for Electronic Transactions (65 FR 50311)  
The final rule adopted the initial standards for transactions and code sets.  
Published 8/17/2000
- Standards for Privacy & Individually Identifiable Health Information (65 FR 82461)  
The final rule adopted standards for the privacy of personal health information.  
Published 12/28/2000

### EDI TRANSACTION EXTENSION:

- If you want to file for a transaction deadline extension, you can do this electronically at the CMS site: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/>

### ACRONYMS & JARGON:

- Use these sites to look up the acronyms that are used throughout the HIPAA regulation.
- If you need specific IT related words use the [whatis?com](http://whatis.com).link.
- You should know acronyms like PHI, PTO, ACG, BP.

**ASSESSMENTS:**

- Select tools that facilitate EDI mapping and have been certified by (WEDI) Workgroups for Electronic Data Interchange.
- Look for affordable web-based assessment tools capable of performing the most comprehensive measurement of HIPAA risk available.
- Look for tools that make sure your Legacy Systems are HIPAA compatible.
- Healthcare Software Solutions provides tools that can convert Legacy Systems into HIPAA compliant formats that include a graphical user interface and security roles for logins.
- Look for vendors that supply security matrix or security risk analysis, which can be helpful for your security officer.
- Look for vendors that supply privacy checklists that are current with the new regulations.

**BUG IDENTIFICATION:**

- Let your IT department know that there is bug detector software on the market.

**DISASTER RECOVERY:**

- If your IT department does not have a disaster recovery process in place, they must prepare one.
- Look for cost-effective sites that will share expertise in this area.
- Once the disaster recovery system is in place, it will need to be tested.
- Make sure to have off-site locations for backup data.

**TRANSACTION TESTING:**

- A common myth: My vendor is going to solve my transaction responsibilities.
- You need to be familiar with the HIPAA transactions, the way they flow and which ones would be implemented electronically first for the best ROI.
- There are tools that will help with transaction testing and even provide error detection.
- Visit the WEDI-SNIP (Strategic National Implementation Project) site often, and subscribe to their updates.

**VENDORS, CONTRACTS, RFPs, etc:**

- We never comment on contracts from a legal point of view.
- When evaluating vendors, consider their experience and capabilities to address the project from beginning to end.
- Be very careful when using the preponderance of HIPAA forms when involving issues that need a review from an attorney. These forms cannot replace the services that an attorney will give.
- In depth performance reports provide a “snapshot” view of a vendor’s performance, with ratings and commentary from healthcare professionals and I.T. executives.

**CONSULTING VENDORS:**

- There are many consulting vendors and formulating your organization's criteria of needs will be helpful in selecting a particular vendor.
- Some medical organizations feel uncomfortable working with large consulting firms. There are many smaller ones that have a less intimidating style.
- Many organizations fail to use the expertise of a consultant when it is needed, and this results in a loss of time and money.
- Create criteria when consultants need to be used.

**INTERNET BASED SYSTEMS:**

- You must be comfortable with the use of an intranet to gain the maximum benefit of Internet based HIPAA solutions.
- If you are using an intranet, someone needs to insure the security of the IT infrastructure that is being used. If in doubt use a security consultant to assess your needs.
- Portal solutions can be very powerful, and there are several vendors using this media.

**PRIVACY & SECURITY:**

- There are so many sites that have information on privacy and security that you should always be able to refer to the HHS regulations on security and privacy that are listed in the federal register.
- There are many useful checklist and forms that can compliment your implementation of the security and privacy mandates.

**STATE ASSOCIATIONS:**

- Many state associations have done a tremendous job in facilitating and providing not only members of their own state but the public with HIPAA information and tools.
- Utah had the foresight to understand the need for EDI transactions so the entire state is already using EDI for all of the HIPAA transactions.
- Refer to the Texas Department of Health to links for state laws that may override the HIPAA regulations.

**SUMMARY:**

- Know when you need to use a consultant.
- Join in as many organizations that you can that provide free HIPAA compliance tips and tools.