

HIPAA's Privacy Rule and Security Rule is now a nationwide privacy standard that protects and secures all American's health information.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Compliance

It's the law as of April 14, 2001. Federal government spells out new regulations for medical information privacy. Privacy Rule full compliance began on April 14, 2003.

HIPAA was enacted to ensure that private health information stays just that – private – no matter the method of communication. Patient data is readily available in computer systems, via faxes, wireless communication and the old standby – paper. Even a casual passerby can often see confidential patient information when visiting someone in the hospital. A click of the "send" button and information can be flowing, maybe to the wrong party.

HIPAA's Privacy Rule is designed to protect and enhance the rights of consumers by improving access to their personal health information and to provide control over patient health information uses and disclosures. The General Rule states: Protected health information may not be used or disclosed for reasons other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations without specific patient authorization.

Covered Entities

The law affects those who transmit any health information in connection with a standardized transaction. (e.g. Health Plans, Clearinghouses and Providers)

Covered entities will also need to implement many of the requirements defined in the up-coming Security Rule, including defining the proper functions and location of workstations so that patient health information is not inappropriately stored or viewed on a workstation.

Business Associates: organizations that provide a service to covered entities resulting in an interaction with patient health information.

3M Privacy Filter Solutions

3M™ Computer Privacy Filters are a low-cost solution to the unintentional release of computerized medical data.

While it is possible to keep the central patient files under lock and key and use security software, the information displayed on computers throughout a health care facility is often in plain sight. 3M offers a solution to help prevent inadvertent disclosure of patient information, including information displayed on computer monitors in areas where almost anyone could see the data – nursing stations, patient rooms and check-in desks to name just a few.

3M™ Privacy Computer Filters are excellent for open, high traffic environments where on-screen data needs to be kept secure. 3M™ Privacy Computer Filters work like tiny vertical blinds to block information, from a side view, unlike other privacy filters which just blur information, but could still allow information to be read.