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POLICY

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, PRIVACY AND SECURITY, RESEARCH AND
SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

HIPAA Policies for Healthcare Providers at Covered Components: Policy 12, Definitions

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE

Research Compliance

This Policy 12 is part of the [HIPAA Policy Manual: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information for BU Healthcare Provider Covered Components.](#)

Application is a computer program that processes information. Examples are Microsoft Outlook 365; electronic medical record programs; and programs that allow the sending and receiving of electronic data.

Data Center is a physical location where servers are kept.

Device means any electronic item that stores and processes (does something to or with) electronic data. This broad term includes desktop computers, laptops, tablets, mobile phones,

medical devices, printers and fax machines that contain hard drives, and anything else that can store and process electronic data. Devices may be owned by BU or may be personal devices owned by the workforce member.

Disclosure means the release, transfer, provision of access to, or divulging in any manner of information outside the entity holding the information.

Electronic media means: (1) Electronic storage material on which data is or may be recorded electronically, including, for example, devices in computers (hard drives) and any removable/transportable digital memory medium, such as magnetic tape or disk, optical disk, or digital memory card; (2) Transmission media used to exchange information already in electronic storage media. Transmission media include, for example, the Internet, extranet or intranet, leased lines, dial-up lines, private networks, and the physical movement of removable/transportable electronic storage media. Certain transmissions, including of paper, via facsimile, and of voice, via telephone, are not considered to be transmissions via electronic media if the information being exchanged did not exist in electronic form immediately before the transmission

Electronic protected health *information* means information that comes within paragraphs (1)(i) or (1)(ii) of the definition of protected health information as specified in this section.

Health care means care, services, or supplies related to the health of an individual. Health care includes, but is not limited to, the following: (1) Preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic, rehabilitative, maintenance, or palliative care, and counseling, service, assessment, or procedure with respect to the physical or mental condition, or functional status, of an individual or that affects the structure or function of the body; and (2) Sale or dispensing of a drug, device, equipment, or other item in accordance with a prescription.

Health care component means a component or combination of components of a hybrid entity designated by the hybrid entity in accordance with § 164.105(a)(2)(iii)(D).

Health care operations means any of the following activities of the covered entity to the extent that the HIPAA Administrative Simplification Regulation Text March 2013 75 activities are related to covered functions:

(1) Conducting quality assessment and improvement activities, including outcomes evaluation

and development of clinical guidelines, provided that the obtaining of generalizable knowledge is not the primary purpose of any studies resulting from such activities; patient safety activities (as defined in 42 CFR 3.20); population-based activities relating to improving health or reducing health care costs, protocol development, case management and care coordination, contacting of health care providers and patients with information about treatment alternatives; and related functions that do not include treatment;

(2) Reviewing the competence or qualifications of health care professionals, evaluating practitioner and provider performance, health plan performance, conducting training programs in which students, trainees, or practitioners in areas of health care learn under supervision to practice or improve their skills as health care providers, training of non-health care professionals, accreditation, certification, licensing, or credentialing activities;

(3) Except as prohibited under § 164.502(a)(5)(i), underwriting, enrollment, premium rating, and other activities related to the creation, renewal, or replacement of a contract of health insurance or health benefits, and ceding, securing, or placing a contract for reinsurance of risk relating to claims for health care (including stop-loss insurance and excess of loss insurance), provided that the requirements of § 164.514(g) are met, if applicable;

(4) Conducting or arranging for medical review, legal services, and auditing functions, including fraud and abuse detection and compliance programs;

(5) Business planning and development, such as conducting cost-management and planning related analyses related to managing and operating the entity, including formulary development and administration, development or improvement of methods of payment or coverage policies; and

(6) Business management and general administrative activities of the entity, including, but not limited to: (i) Management activities relating to implementation of and compliance with the requirements of this subchapter; (ii) Customer service, including the provision of data analyses for policy holders, plan sponsors, or other customers, provided that protected health information is not disclosed to such policy holder, plan sponsor, or customer. (iii) Resolution of internal grievances; (iv) The sale, transfer, merger, or consolidation of all or part of the covered entity with another covered entity, or an entity that following such activity will become a covered entity and due diligence related to such activity; and (v) Consistent with the applicable requirements of § 164.514, creating de-identified health information or a limited

data set, and fundraising for the benefit of the covered entity.

Health care provider means a provider of services (as defined in section 1861(u) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 1395x(u)), a provider of medical or health services (as defined in section 1861(s) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. 1395x(s)), and any other person or organization who furnishes, bills, or is paid for health care in the normal course of business.

Health information means any information, including genetic information, whether oral or recorded in any form or medium, that:

- (1) Is created or received by a health care provider, health plan, public health authority, employer, life insurer, school or university, or health care clearinghouse; and
- (2) Relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual.

Hybrid entity means a single legal entity:

- (1) that is a covered entity;
- (2) whose business activities include both covered and non-covered functions; and
- (3) that designates health care components in accordance with paragraph §164.105(a)(2)(iii)(D).

Individual means the person who is the subject of protected health information. Individually identifiable health information is information that is a subset of health information, including demographic information collected from an individual, and:

- (1) Is created or received by a health care provider, health plan, employer, or health care clearinghouse; and

(2) Relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual; and

(i) That identifies the individual; or

(ii) With respect to which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual.

Media means any item that can store but not process data, including USB drives, CD-ROMs, DVDs, hard drives, back up disks.

Protected health information means individually identifiable health information:

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this definition, that is:

(i) Transmitted by electronic media;

(ii) Maintained in electronic media; or

(iii) Transmitted or maintained in any other form or medium.

(2) Protected health information excludes individually identifiable health information:

(i) In education records covered by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1232g;

(ii) In records described at 20 U.S.C. 1232g(a)(4)(B)(iv);

(iii) In employment records held by a covered entity in its role as employer; and

(iv) Regarding a person who has been deceased for more than 50 years.

Research means a systematic investigation, including research development, testing, and evaluation, designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.

System means one or more computer servers and their related applications. For example, the GSDM electronic system is composed of the servers, the electronic medical record, the backup function and related applications.

Treatment means the provision, coordination, or management of health care and related services by one or more health care providers, including the coordination or management of health care by a health care provider with a third party; consultation between health care providers relating to a patient; or the referral of a patient for health care from one health care provider to another.

Use means, with respect to individually identifiable health information, the sharing, employment, application, utilization, examination, or analysis of such information within an entity that maintains such information.

Workforce means employees, volunteers, trainees, and other persons whose conduct, in the performance of work for a covered entity or business associate, is under the direct control of such covered entity or business associate, whether or not they are paid by the covered entity or business associate.

END OF POLICY TEXT

Additional Resources Regarding This Policy

Related Policies, Procedures, and Guides

- HIPAA
 - [HIPAA Policy Manual: Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information for BU Healthcare Provider Covered Components](#)
 - [HIPAA Policies for BU Health Plans](#)
 - [HIPAA Information for Charles River Campus Researchers](#)
- Data Security
 - [Data Protection Standards](#)

BU Websites

- [HIPAA at Boston University](#)
 - [FAQ's](#)
 - [Forms for Health Care Providers](#)
 - [HIPAA for BU Researchers](#)
 - [HIPAA Data Security Tips](#)
 - [Report a Possible HIPAA Breach](#)

Categories: Information Management, Privacy and Security, Protected Health Information - HIPAA for BU Healthcare, Research and Scholarly Activities, Research Compliance and Safety