

HIPAA

HIPAA Glossary

Overwhelmed with the terminologies regarding the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)? Below are some of the key terms and their definitions to guide you.

Business Associate (BA): An individual or business that offers a service to or performs a specific function or activity on behalf of a covered entity. It can be a subcontractor that generates, receives, maintains, or transfers personal health information (PHI) on behalf of another BA.

Business Associate Agreement (BAA): A required legal contract that states which PHI the business associate may access, how the PHI is to be used, and the requirements for returning or destroying the PHI.

Covered Entity (CE): Any business entity that must comply with HIPAA regulations. CEs include a healthcare clearinghouse, health plan, or healthcare provider, such as a hospital, physician, or other caregivers. CEs also typically manage billing and other payment-related transactions digitally.

Cloud Service Provider (CSP): Any subcontractor that processes electronically protected health information (ePHI) in the cloud. It creates, receives, maintains, and transmits ePHI on behalf of a CE or BA.

Electronic Protected Health Information (ePHI): This is protected health information (PHI) that is kept or transferred electronically.

Electronic Health Record (EHR): An individual's health-related information stored electronically that complies with nationally recognized standards. It can be created, managed, and consulted by authorized staff and clinicians across many healthcare organizations.

Electronic Medical Record (EMR): This is an electronic version of medical information that is typically recorded on paper. EMRs are accessible within a healthcare organization—like a hospital or clinic. These records contain data gathered by the medical practitioner that help diagnose and provide appropriate care for patients.

Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH): The HITECH Act aims to encourage and expand the adoption of the use of electronic health records (EHRs) by healthcare providers. It eliminated the gaps in HIPAA and specified tougher penalties for HIPAA violations.

Personal Health Record (PHR): These electronically stored records contain information from various facilities and sources, such as medical histories, medications, diagnoses, and immunizations. Unlike EHRs and EMRs, the patient is the one who has access to and can manage their data.

Protected Health Information (PHI): A term that also refers to personal health information, such as medical histories, insurance details, test and laboratory results, and other gathered data required to provide appropriate care.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Civil Rights (OCR): The HHS OCR enforces various laws, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).