

HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA) OF 1996

The HIPAA Privacy Rule places restriction on how healthcare providers use and disclose an individual's protected health information (PHI). PHI is any information that would identify an individual by the information that is transmitted by healthcare providers in paper, electronic, or oral form that relates to individual health, healthcare services or payment for healthcare. The HIPAA Security Rule that became effective in 2005 requires healthcare practitioners to adopt safeguards to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of PHI by implementing policies and procedures to address proper disposal of PHI, including shredding paper records. Healthcare providers may not simply abandon or dispose of PHI in dumpsters. Dumpster disposal of in-house shredded PHI presents a significant risk of HIPAA Security Rule violation due to retrieval and reassembly of PHI.