

Importance of HIPAA Compliance when Outsourcing Medical Transcription

In today's healthcare industry, outsourced medical transcription services are in high demand. It has not only helped doctors ease the process of documenting patient medical records but also improved the quality of patient care.

Hospitals and private practices have started preferring outsourcing as they are finding it difficult to handle large number of patient records. Medical transcription requires accuracy in a short turnaround time. When choosing a service provider, it is extremely important to know if the company offers [HIPAA-compliant transcription services](#). This is vital in order to ensure that confidential patient data is handled in a secure manner.

HIPAA compliance is extremely important if a healthcare organization is looking for secure transcription services. It is equally important for choose a service provider that prioritizes protection of patient health information as per the HIPAA regulations. Whether a company handles computer dictation, telephonic dictation or digital handheld dictation, HIPAA compliance should not be ignored.

Reputed service providers take extra care in hiring experienced transcriptionists who are well-aware of the HIPAA strictures. They go that extra mile to train their staff in HIPAA because failure to comply with the regulations can result in serious penalties. Only the best technology and infrastructure is used to make sure that the confidential healthcare data doesn't get misused. Many companies even provide periodic educational programs to their transcriptionists so that they remain updated with changing requirements of HIPAA compliance.

When approaching a service provider, the healthcare organization must enquire about the measures the company takes to achieve compliance. For instance, a reputed company will do the following:

- Encrypt files that contain PHI so that the access is only limited to authorized personnel
- They don't let work-at-home transcriptionists or subcontractors handle medical transcription work
- They protect their networks with Firewall and only use password-protected computers that have latest anti-virus installed
- Services providers make their employees sign privacy and non-disclosure agreements. Transcriptionists and administrators are required to get the necessary clearance before starting work
- Unwanted or damaged medical data is shredded without any delay

- 24/7 security personnel are appointed to ensure maximum security
- Technical assessments are carried out on a routine basis to make sure all security systems are working perfectly

HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) plays an important role in striking a balance between transfer and use of health information and safeguarding of patient privacy. [Medical transcription service providers](#) fall under the business associates category under HIPAA who are responsible for carrying out services for the healthcare provider such as hospitals or private practices. Services offered by transcription companies involve the exposure of health information that can be individually recognized.