RINGRx

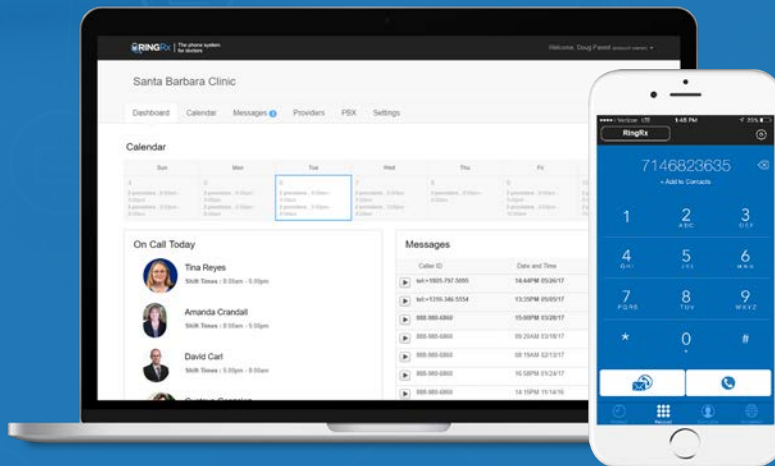## IS YOUR HEALTHCARE PRACTICE
Telecommunication System HIPAA-Compliant?

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Healthcare Phone Systems and HIPAA: Are You in Compilance?

Did You Know?

78% of employees show a lack of preparedness, training and resources to protect the privacy and security of sensitive information like patient data. Source: The 2017 State of Privacy and Security Awareness Report by MediaPro, a cybersecurity and privacy education organization.

As a healthcare provider, you have a legal responsibility, under the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act, to protect every patient's personal health information. As technology continues to penetrate every facet of a modern healthcare practice, the potential for a security breach has become much more likely, and even more difficult to understand.

The RingRx approach helps alleviate this enormous burden by providing a fully HIPAA-compliant and secure cloud-based platform built specifically for the modern healthcare practice. The security of your practice is our top priority and we'll work with you closely to make sure your system is designed and configured to not only help your company perform better, but to also guarantee your compliance with minimal effort on your part.

What Are Cloud Technologies?

Cloud technology, or cloud computing, is simply one way to deliver technology services, including tools and applications, via the internet.

Traditionally, these heavy programs and services have hogged valuable space on healthcare practice computers and were delivered by direct connection to a physical server. Cloud-based storage allows users to store everything from patient files to telecommunication systems in a remote database instead of maintaining them on a physical hard drive or local storage device. This will not only free up space on your computers, but it's also a much more secure means of data storage.

With cloud technology, everything can be accessed with any device connected to the internet, including smartphones, computers, laptops and tablets. And remember, it's all protected with the utmost data security and HIPAA-compliance.

IS RINGRX A CLOUD-BASED SERVICE?

Yes, it most definitely is! Other voice-over-internet-protocol and hosted-PBX services are also classified as cloud-based. The RingRx platform is hosted by secure cloud-based servers and all users access our robust healthcare phone services via devices connected to the internet. All messages, both text and talk, and faxed and saved files received through your RingRx phone system are stored on cloud-based servers.

What is HIPAA and Why is it Relevant?

Working in healthcare you probablyalready have a pretty good understanding of HIPAA and might even be able to answer this question yourself. If you can, great, skip ahead!

HIPAA has become a central operational and legal matter affecting every practice. Remaining in compliance with HIPAA regulations requires abundant attention and resources.

HIPAA is the acronym for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. While the regulation covers several areas, the most relevant aspect of it, as it pertains to a healthcare practice, is maintaining confidentiality of patient information. This information is referred to as Protected Health Information, or "PHI." The Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") is the federal agency responsible for implementing PHI regulation and defines it as"

INDIVIDUALLY IDENTIFIABLE HEALTH INFORMATION" HELD OR TRANSMITTED BY A COVERED ENTITY OR ITS BUSINESS ASSOCIATE, IN ANY FORM OR MEDIA, WHETHER ELECTRONIC, PAPER, OR ORAL. THIS INFORMATION RELATES TO:

- ⊘ **the individual's** past, present or future physical or mental health or condition,
- ⊘ **the provision** of health care to the individual, or
- ⊘ **the past,** present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual,

and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe can be used to identify the individual. Individually identifiable health information includes many common identifiers (e.g., name, address, birth date, Social Security Number).

Compliance with this basic rule requires policies, procedures, and systems to be in place in nearly every corner of your company. Managing this alone is hard enough, but the company's responsibility does not end there. You are also responsible for making sure any vendors who may come in contact with PHI handle the information properly. These vendors are referred to as "business associates" and, as a modern healthcare company, you will undoubtedly have several. HIPAA requires all healthcare offices follow set practices and procedures with business associates to ensure you always stay in compliance with the regulation.

Exactly How Does RingRx Help ensure HIPAA Compliance?

HIPAA spells out six main areas healthcare practices must follow to remain in compliance. Compliance practices must be applied to every patient file, vendor relationship and communication in your practice.

THE SIX PILLARS OF HIPAA COMPLIANCE

⊘ **Physical security of PHI**

⊘ **Encryption**

⊘ **Training**

⊘ **Product security/Password protection**

⊘ **Auditing**

⊘ **Business Associate Agreement (BAA)**

RingRx follows strict protocols in these six areas to ensure that the service we provide to you is secure and always in compliance with the law. Our commitment to HIPAA-compliance helps ease the burden of healthcare practices, allowing you to return your focus to patient care.

RINGRX ENSURES THE PHYSICAL SECURITY OF PHI

Our expert team built a unique storage architecture specifically to maintain all PHI data on encrypted hard drives. Servers maintaining this data are managed in several geographic locations to mitigate against localized failures of one or more server facilities. These data silos include any sources with PHI including voicemails, faxes, patient contact information and other personal data. Information in flight is only unencrypted when interactions with the PSTN and/or telephony endpoints require it. All other activity is encrypted and requires bidirectional authentication within the platform elements. This secure encryption protects PHI from hacking attempts, unauthorized access, and adheres to HIPAA-compliance standards.

Ongoing compliance efforts focus on ensuring all systems are managed through orchestration frameworks with constant enforcement against a known baseline to prevent massive log harvesting. By constantly monitoring our system and tracking analytics from all platform elements, we are constantly improving PHI security to achieve an effectively zero error threshold.

SECURE DATA AND FILE ENCRYPTION

Our customers trust us with sensitive information including patient records and health-related voicemails. Your RingRx account automatically encrypts all data and files transmitted and saved within your cloud-based account. You don't have to do a thing to maintain compliance so long as all communication takes place through your RingRx phone service.

The system includes full end-to-end encryption of PHI using strong encryption methods on data that is both at rest as well as in-flight. We also use aggressive encryption key rotation strategies to prevent unauthorized access of files containing PHI.

STAFF TRAINING IS ESSENTIAL

Encrypting and securing data are critical to ensuring a compliant cloud service, but it is not enough. If the staff involved in the daily operations of any provider's office are not aware of the sensitivity of data and the accepted practices for managing and controlling data, a breach becomes much more likely. And because 78% of employees lack data security preparedness, it's essential they be educated before interacting with any patient data.

A comprehensive and ongoing education and training program is a critical aspect for ensuring HIPAA-compliance. All staff at every healthcare practice must be trained to follow processes and procedures to ensure your office remains in compliance at all times. .

At RingRx, our entire staff undergoes rigorous and regular training of security laws and practices, internal standards and product design. Our initial training is supplemented with regular ongoing training, education, and updates to new legal interpretations.

REGULAR AUDITING

RingRx maintains a rigorous auditing system. External audits of network systems and data custody is conducted annually, which includes deployment and maintenance practices. All infrastructure is managed using orchestration frameworks to minimize any possibility of policy deviation.

Routine automated audits are also conducted regularly and on an ongoing basis to ensure access is limited to authorized personnel only.

SIGN A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT (BAA) WITH EVERY VENDOR

The US Department of Health and Human Services defines a "business associate" as "a person or entity, other than a member of the workforce of a covered entity, who performs functions or activities on behalf of, or provides certain services to, a covered entity that involve access by the business associate to protected health information."

HIPAA requires healthcare providers and business associates enter into a formal agreement to affirm their relationship and the responsibilities the business associate has in protecting and safeguarding protected health information. You should have a BAA signed with every vendor who comes into contact with any amount of PHI.

Vendors that provide cloud-based PBX services, like RingRx, definitely fall under this position. Healthcare providers should ensure that any cloud-based services follow appropriate HIPAA procedures and sign a BAA as part of their normal course of business.

DOES RINGRX PROVIDE A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT (BAA)?

RingRx does indeed provide a BAA for every customer regardless of the size of company or scope of service. RingRx uses an approved agreement that we will complete and sign within one business day of your request. If you have your own BAA you prefer to use, please allow five business days for review and completion.

You may request your BAA using our automated form here: https://ringrx.com/business-associate-agreement-request. Or, if you have any questions or concerns about the BAA, just give us a call at 888-980-6860.

WHAT PROTECTIONS ARE TAKEN TO MAXIMIZE CONFIDENTIALITY?

Data encryption, PHI security, staff training, auditing and BAAs are all ways in which we ensure the confidentiality of patient information. But the most important protection offered to our customers is our understanding of the relationship between a healthcare provider and their patients and the role we play in that relationship.

Our goal is to make it easier and safer to communicate with patients and other healthcare staff members to help you grow your practice safely. We also implement and manage multiple layers of security within our system to prevent any attempt of unauthorized access and external threats.

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS COVERED BY HIPAA?

As previously mentioned, the information that HIPAA is most concerned about is Protected Health Information, or PHI.

In communications solutions, PHI can take the form of any type of communication or data, including voice messages, text messages, fax information, provider notes, or any other kind of communication that results in stored data.

Some cloud-based communications services struggle with a lack of control over PHI stored in automated systems.That's why RingRx implements security at every level of our service where PHI could potentially be received and stored. Regardless whether it's a voicemail, a recorded call, or a physician note about a received message, everything is secure and protected within your RingRx phone system.

Conclusion

There are many factors you should consider when picking your next communications service provider and compliance is only one of them. RingRx's philosophy is to make compliance for our customers an effortless exercise so they can focus on what is most important to them: Running their business. Our other features and tools will help you with that as well!

*If you have any questions about the content of this whitepaper
or RingRx in general, please contact us:*

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