

What IS HIPPA?

HIPAA stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Passed in 1996 HIPAA is a federal law that sets a national standard to protect medical records and other personal health information. The rule defines "protected health information" as health information that:

1. Identifies an individual and
2. Is maintained or exchanged electronically or in hard copy.

If the information has any components that could be used to identify a person, it would be protected. The protection would stay with the information as long as the information is in the hands of a covered entity or a business associate. The protections apply to individually identifiable information in any form, electronic or non-electronic. The paper progeny of electronic information is covered (i.e. the information would not lose its protections simply because it is printed out of a computer), and oral communications are also covered.

Information is also available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/privacyrule/privacy-HIPAAfacts.htm>