



# HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act)



## Protected Health Information (PHI)

- Any health information that can be linked to a specific person
- Examples:
  - Medical information and records
  - Billing information and records
  - Patient first and last name & physician



- Proper destruction of PHI and ePHI (Electronic Protected Health Information) is the responsibility of every interpreter who handles this information.

## HIPAA and PHI



- HIPAA- a federal law protecting the privacy of Protected Health Information (PHI)
- The overall purpose:
  - To ensure the security and privacy of individual health information
- HIPAA affects all organizations that deal with a person's health information
- PHI- Any health information that can be linked to a specific person
- The Privacy Rule is a set of national standards for the protection of PHI.



# Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) Compliance and Enforcement



- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services regulates and enforces HIPAA through its Office of Civil Rights (OCR)
- The OCR receives complaints, investigates, and imposes corrective action
- Civil penalties imposed
- Criminal penalties imposed
- You could be personally liable; HIPAA holds individuals accountable
- Willful misconduct will result in the immediate removal of the interpreter from LSA's network

## Breaches



- What is a breach?

*Gossiping*

*Emailing/Faxing PHI to the wrong person*

*Snooping*

*Not properly discarding PHI*

*Stolen laptop*

*Posting on social network sites*

- What should be done if there is a potential or actual breach? **Report it immediately to LSA's Compliance Department** at [JBralow@lsaweb.com](mailto:JBralow@lsaweb.com). You can also call our anonymous Compliance Hotline 833-234-4831 and leave a message
- What should be done if PHI is faxed or emailed to the wrong person?
  - Fax/e-mail a request to the incorrect fax number/e-mail address asking that the materials be destroyed
  - Verify the fax number/e-mail address with the recipient before attempting to send the information again

## How to Prevent a Breach

- Intervene when you hear someone sharing PHI with someone who does not need to know
- Do not discuss health information in public areas
- When accessing or requesting information, limit the request to only the minimum information you need to do your job
- Electronic fingerprints never go away
- Properly destroy Protected Health Information! If confidential information is on paper, always shred the documents before discarding.
- Recording of any LSA calls/interpretation sessions is strictly prohibited. This includes over the phone, video remote and on location interpretation.



## How to Prevent a Breach

- Keep sensitive information in locked drawers
- Keep computers and laptops locked
- Never share your password with anyone
- Do not make information easy to access and take
- Try to de-identify someone (eliminate Protected Health Information)
- Do not share information
- If you must email PHI, use **encrypted** email.
- Never send PHI via text message.



## Questions?

- If you have any questions about HIPAA or other compliance issues, or need to report a HIPAA, Fraud, Waste & Abuse violation, or other have any other compliance concern, please contact LSA's Compliance Department at [jbralow@lsaweb.com](mailto:jbralow@lsaweb.com) or reach out to us via our anonymous hotline: 833-234-4831.