ICCOM

Good morning,

Are you thinking about how to send patient bills via email? You are not the only one. This will help you understand your HIPAA compliance requirements.

The following is Health and Human Services stand on emailing patient e-PHI. This includes e-billing.

The Security Rule does not expressly prohibit the use of email for sending e-PHI. However, the standards for access control (45 CFR § 164.312(a)), integrity (45 CFR § 164.312(c)(1)), and transmission security (45 CFR § 164.312(e)(1)) require covered entities to implement policies and procedures to restrict access to, protect the integrity of, and guard against unauthorized access to e-PHI. The standard for transmission security (§ 164.312(e)) also includes addressable specifications for integrity controls and encryption. This means that the covered entity must assess its use of open networks, identify the available and appropriate means to protect e-PHI as it is transmitted, select a solution, and document the decision. The Security Rule allows for e-PHI to be sent over an electronic open network as long as it is adequately protected.

This is what I know for sure. There are no encrypted email systems/servers out there. Especially hotmail, yahoo, etc.

There are two ways of sending patient bills as safely as possible.

FIRST: Sending the bill through the email as a password protected attachment ....Time consuming.

1)   Get written permission from the patient to send their bills via email.

2)   Save file to a .pdf format.

3)   Password Protect the .pdf with a password that is known by both parties. Example: last four digits of their social security number etc.

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Call Edie a...
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or CLICK t...
email E...

4)   State in the email to use the last four digits of their ss# to open the email. The email itself should be very generic.

5)   Attach the file to an email - individually

6)   Send the email

<mark>SECOND: PGP software installed on your secure website. This is the BEST way.</mark>

The most secure way is using PGP software. Safest method would be a secure web site. You would email a link to your website for your patients to view their bill. The patient would have to set up their own user name and password. They could then login and print or save a copy of their bill in .pdf format. Most of us would need an IT person to set this up. But this is the best and most protected way.

What this means is that you would have a bulk email sent that tells the patients their monthly statement is available at (link). Exactly how your online bank statement, cell phone statements, credit card statments etc handle it.

My goal with these e-newsletters is to keep you informed by addressing questions that are asked by your piers. Email your questions to me using this link **CLICK**

Edie

<mark>**If you are still not sure if you are compliant, go take the checklist quiz? Are you compliant? Find out for yourself.**</mark>

HIPAA Privacy Checklist

HIPAA Security Checklist

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Please visit my website to purchase the HIPAA Privacy and HIPAA Security Policies and Procedures manual, as well as, the HITECH HIPAA updates for 2010.

http://www.iccom.org/index_files/ICCOMProducts.html

email me with any questions you may have: (click here to email me)