

# Health Information Privacy

---

Covered Entities (14)
Decedents (8)
Disclosures for Law Enforcement Purposes (7)
Disclosures for Rule Enforcement (2)
Disclosures in Emergency Situations (2)
Disclosures Required by Law (6)
Disclosures to Family and Friends (28)
Disposal of Protected Health Information (6)
Facility Directories (7)
Family Medical History Information (3)
FERPA and HIPAA (10)
Group Health Plans (3)
Health Information Technology (41)
Incidental Uses and Disclosures (10)
Judicial and Administrative Proceedings (8)
Limited Data Set (5)
Marketing (18)
Marketing - Refill Reminders (16)
Mental Health (35)
Minimum Necessary (14)
Notice of Privacy Practice (20)
Personal Representatives and Minors (13)
Preemption of State Law (10)
Privacy Rule: General Topics (12)
Protected Health Information (2)
Public Health Uses and Disclosures (14)
Research Uses and Disclosures (20)
Right to Access and Research (58)
Right to an Accounting of Disclosures (8)
Right to File a Complaint (1)
Right to Request a Restriction (2)

Safeguards (13)
Security Rule (25)
Smaller Providers and Businesses (148)
Student Immunizations (8)
Transition Provisions (3)
Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations Disclosures (30)
Workers Compensation Disclosures (5)

## Can health care information be shared in a severe disaster?

Answer:

**Providers and health plans covered by the HIPAA Privacy Rule can share patient information in all of the following ways:**

**TREATMENT: Health care providers can share patient information as necessary to provide treatment.**

Treatment includes:

- sharing information with other providers (including hospitals and clinics),
- referring patients for treatment (including linking patients with available providers in areas where the patients have relocated), and
- coordinating patient care with others (such as emergency relief workers or others that can help in finding patients appropriate health services).

Providers can also share patient information to the extent necessary to seek payment for these health care services.

**NOTIFICATION: Health care providers can share patient information as necessary to identify, locate, and notify family members, guardians, or anyone else responsible for the individual's care of the individual's location, general condition, or death.**

The health care provider should get verbal permission from individuals, when possible; but if the individual is incapacitated or not available, providers may share information for these purposes if, in their professional judgement, doing so is in the patient's best interest.

- Thus, when necessary, the hospital may notify the police, the press, or the public at large to the extent necessary to help locate, identify, or otherwise notify family members and others as to the location and general condition of their loved ones.
- In addition, when a health care provider is sharing information with disaster relief organizations that, like the American Red Cross, are authorized by law or by their charters to assist in disaster relief efforts, it is unnecessary to obtain a patient's permission to share the information if doing so would interfere with the organization's ability to respond to the emergency.

**IMMINENT DANGER: Providers can share patient information with anyone as necessary to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health and safety of a person or the public -- consistent with applicable law and the provider's standards of ethical conduct.**

**FACILITY DIRECTORY: Health care facilities maintaining a directory of patients can tell people who call or ask about individuals whether the individual is at the facility, their location in the facility, and general condition.**

Of course, the HIPAA Privacy Rule does not apply to disclosures if they are not made by entities covered by the Privacy Rule. Thus, for instance, the HIPAA Privacy Rule does not restrict the American Red Cross from sharing patient information.

Created 9/2/05