HIPAA COMPLIANCE: THE SECRET TO MAKING YOUR MEDICAL PRACTICE A PROFITABLE BUSINESS
HIPAA has been around since 1996, with administrative reforms taking place in phases between 2000-2003. Most covered entities purchased HIPAA manuals and trained their staff during this time, but HIPAA has been almost neglected by many practices since then. Becoming and maintaining HIPAA compliance is not only necessary to avoid government fines, but is required if you plan to make your medical practice a profitable and successful business.

MAKE YOUR MEDICAL PRACTICE MORE COMPETITIVE

You probably don’t think of HIPAA compliance regulations as part of your medical practice growth plan, or as a way to increase the profitability of your practice. In fact, you probably see the HIPAA legislation as an inconvenience and expense. Becoming fully HIPAA compliant means your practice keeps its policies up to date, and your staff
trained for how to protect the privacy of patient’s health and confidential data.

Even if you somehow manage to squeak by government audits without being fined for lack of HIPAA compliance, if your competitors are maintaining compliance, they're going to leave you in their dust. Being HIPAA compliant is the only way for your medical practice to form partnerships with hospitals and other larger healthcare organizations, and the only way to receive government grants for Medicaid or Medicare related funding.

Becoming and maintaining HIPAA compliance will make your medical practice more competitive, and offer growth opportunities you simply wouldn’t have access to otherwise.

**AVOID COSTLY GOVERNMENT FINES**

A single complaint to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) could cost your practice $50,000 or more in fines if you’re found to be in violation of HIPAA. Many medical practices are violating HIPAA without even realizing it and this can be a very costly mistake.

The HHS’ Office for Civil Rights is responsible for enforcement of the Privacy Rule as of April 2003 for most covered entities and the government is actively doing audits at this time. If your medical practice is selected for an audit, you will want to contact your legal counsel, or if you are a client of Matthijssen,
give us a call. Our partnership with a law firm that specializes in HIPAA compliance gives you a one-stop-shop for all of your HIPAA needs. We can help you provide the requested documentation and demonstrate that your technology is HIPAA compliant during the on-site portion of the audit.

To avoid the steep fines associated with HIPAA non-compliance, all medical practices should dust off their HIPAA manuals, update the practice’s policies and retrain staff on the requirements of the law. Matthijssen can assist you with all of the steps required to becoming and maintaining HIPAA compliance. Some advanced preparation now will save you considerable amounts of time and effort later, not to mention save you money and help you grow a profitable medical practice.