


Compliance Education

HIPAA Tip Sheet- Personal Identifiers

Health information is considered PHI under HIPAA if an identifier is included in the same record set. An identifier ties the information to an individual. If the information includes any of the 18 identifiers, it should be protected against unauthorized disclosure.

18 HIPAA Identifiers

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) lists the 18 HIPAA identifiers as follows:

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1. Patient names
 2. Geographical elements (such as a street address, city, county, or zip code)
 3. Dates related to the health or identity of individuals (including birthdates, date of admission, date of discharge, date of death, or exact age of a patient older than 89)
 4. Telephone numbers
 5. Fax numbers
 6. Email addresses
 7. Social security numbers
 8. Medical record numbers
 9. Health insurance beneficiary numbers
 10. Account numbers
 11. Certificate/license numbers
 12. Vehicle identifiers
 13. Device attributes or serial numbers
 14. Digital identifiers, such as website URLs
 15. IP addresses
 16. Biometric elements, including finger, retinal, and voiceprints
 17. Full face photographic images
 18. Other identifying numbers or codes

<https://compliance-group.com/protected-health-information-understanding-phi/>

For example, a list of patient's name and their diagnosis is considered PHI but a listing of the most frequent diagnosis treated by VNS Health would not be considered PHI if no identifiers were included.

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For routine HIPAA questions, please contact the HIPAA and Privacy Team at their email:

HIPAAandPrivacy.Team@vnshealth.org

Report potential violations via web at www.vnshealth.ethicspoint.com or

VNS Health Compliance Hotline at 1-888-634-1558