

Compliance Education

HIPAA Tip Sheet: Phishing

If you suspect deceit, hit delete!

What is “phishing”?

Phishing is the fraudulent practice of sending emails that appear to be from a reputable company in order to induce individuals to reveal personal information such as passwords and credit card numbers or to gain access to a computer network.

Why is VNS Health at risk?

Hackers actively target health care providers and health plans because they have valuable data such as customer, patient, student, or employee data, intellectual property, financial account information, or payment card data.

If one employee falls for a phishing attack VNS Health’s entire system can potentially be accessed.

How do I spot a phishing email?

Hackers are clever – their emails look legitimate but phishing emails often have the following characteristics:

- Look like they come from the HR or IT department
- Contain email addresses that don’t match between the header and the body, are misspelled (like @gmaill.com), have unusual formats (@company-othersite411.com), foreign domain names (@russiahackersite.ru) and/or grammatical errors
- Have links or email addresses that show a different destination if you hover or “mouse over” them
- Try to create a sense of urgency about responding
- May be sent as a secure email

Tip: Be extra cautious if you see this:

WARNING: This email arrived from a source external to VNS Health. Please validate the sender and the message content before clicking links or opening attachments.

Tip: Nobody at VNS Health will ever ask you for your password.

What should I do if I receive a suspicious email?

- Do not open email, attachments, or links!
- If you are unsure, ask IT Support at 212-290-3555 or submit a ticket online.
- *Coming Soon: Use the “Report Message” button to report Phishing or Spam*



If you’ve already opened a link or attachment, disconnect your computer from the internet but do not turn it off, and call IT Support immediately!

Rev 5/2023

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

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