**Understanding HIPAA and its compliance requirements**

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, also known as HIPAA, is a federal law that was passed in 1996 to protect privacy rights for individuals who use personal information online. It requires companies to provide their customers with clear and concise information about how they collect, use, and share personal information. This includes providing consumers with access to their personal information, as well as making sure that any changes to this information are made known to them. In addition, it requires companies to make certain that users have the ability to opt out of receiving marketing communications from them.

HIPAA is not only important for protecting individuals' privacy rights, but it also protects businesses from liability if they fail to comply with these laws. Companies must be able to prove that they have taken reasonable steps to ensure that their employees' data is secure and protected. If they do not, then they may face fines or even jail time.

**Components of HIPAA**

There are five sections of HIPAA. These are as follows.

**1)Health Insurance Reform**

This section gives protection against health insurance coverage for individuals who lose or modify their professions.

**2) Administrative Simplification**

This section governs the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to provide standards nationwide for any sort of transactions related to electronic healthcare. It also directs healthcare institutions to provide means for accessing data and information safely related to health.

**3) tax-related health provisions**

This section includes provisions related to tax and factors concerning health care.

**4)Enforcement of group health plan requirements**

This section further defines health insurance reform including those individuals who are seeking continuous coverage.

**5)Revenue offsets**

This section includes provisions that are based on life insurance which is company-owned and the treatment of those who lose their U.S. citizenship for reasons concerning income tax.

**What is the HIPAA compliance requirement?**

According to reports and statistics, Healthcare data breaches in the US had seen to get a percentage hike of nearly 55%. It roughly takes 236 days on average for healthcare firms and organizations to fully recover from the breach. So as a solution to prevent the damaging effects of compromising healthcare information, privacy, and security, HIPAA compliance training is incorporated. There are various requirements for maintaining the integrity of HIPAA compliance.

1)The first step in any of the compliance programs is to execute a series of audits. These audits give a baseline of where an individual’s practice stands against HIPAA law. HIPAA requires covered entities and business associates to conduct annual audits of firms and organizations to assess administrative, technical, and physical gaps in compliance with HIPAA privacy and security standards. Under HIPAA, a security risk assessment is not the only point that is required to be compliant. It’s only one essential audit that HIPAA beholding entities are required to perform to maintain compliance year over year.

2)The next step is the remediation plans. Once covered entities and business associates have identified their gaps in compliance through self-audits, they must implement remediation plans to reverse compliance violations. These must be fully documented and include calendar dates by which gaps will be remediated.

3)Covered entities and business associates must develop policies and procedures corresponding to HIPAA regulatory standards as outlined by the HIPAA rules. These policies and procedures must be regularly updated to account for any kind of changes to the organization .

4)HIPAA beholden organizations must document all efforts to become HIPAA compliant. This documentation is critical during a HIPAA investigation to pass strict HIPAA audits.

5)Covered entities and business associates must document all vendors with whom they share phi in any way and execute business associate agreement business.

**References**

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