



Contract Management Helps Meet the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA)

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HIPAA sets a national standard for the healthcare industry to provide accessible yet secure information, standardize electronic transactions and streamline administrative processes.

Overview

In 1996, US Congress enacted the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) with the main purpose being to ensure accessibility to health insurance for people who are in between jobs or are exiting the workforce. Part of HIPAA also includes *Administrative Simplification* provisions which has changed the business processes of healthcare professionals and whose ramifications have impacted the entire healthcare industry.

Administrative Simplification provisions were put in place due to public concerns about the disclosure of private health information, the need to manage technical advancements and control the transfer of sensitive information. 3 main groups must comply with HIPAA:

- Healthcare Providers
- Health Plan Providers (i.e. Medicare)
- Healthcare Clearinghouses (i.e. those who process data or coordinate information interchanges)

Challenges Facing the Healthcare Industry

- Inefficient processes in managing largely paper-based contracts
- Enforcing compliance with government regulations (i.e. HIPAA, Stark and Internal Revenue Code)
- Managing the renewal of contracts and negotiating the best price with suppliers
- Inaccurate and disorganized processing of managed care information requests
- Difficulty storing and accessing patient information from multiple sources

Contract Management Helps Meet National Standards

With the large number of documents those in the healthcare industry must manage, it is no wonder local codes have been replaced with standardized national code sets. Papers such as health plan eligibility, premium payments, enrollment forms, health claims and more have all been standardized for electronic data interchange (the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the National Council of Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) have played roles in ensuring consistency).

Although standardizing data and documents requires an initial investment, automating processes will create savings in the long run. According to estimates by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), physicians can save approximately \$1.49 per electronically processed claim. A contract management solution such as UpsideContract

UpsideContract Helps Support HIPAA

UpsideContract delivers a best-in-class solution to manage contracts and contractual obligations which ultimately helps companies meet the demanding requirements of the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act.

The key features of UpsideContract used to address HIPAA requirements are:

Central Repository

The repository stores all contract details and associated information providing full visibility into agreements throughout the organization. This ensures that all authorized parties have real-time access to the most current contractual information.

Alternatives

Defining rules to automatically select certain clauses based on specific attributes of a contract.

Workflow Engine

Establishing business rules within the workflow engine provides the necessary internal controls that are regulated automatically by the system.

Full Audit Capabilities

Iron-clad security measures provide a comprehensive audit trail to monitor user activity.

Notifications / Alerts

Alerts and notifications can be established to monitor significant milestones to ensure that the appropriate individuals are aware of critical events.

can further aid to eliminate the need for duplicate data entry thereby ensuring accuracy and decreasing the amount of time required to process information. UpsideContract can also be seamlessly integrated with UpsideBilling to capture billing information for comprehensive contract-to-invoicing coverage.

To increase visibility and ensure vital documents are readily available to stakeholders, UpsideContract's central repository can safely store items while providing 24-7 access. Keeping documents in one central location rather than on several disjointed networks can reduce the time normally required to locate a document and encourages the transfer of knowledge.

Unique Health Identifiers

In order to properly categorize employers, health plans, providers and individuals according to HIPAA regulations, each must be assigned a unique identifier. UpsideContract's robust application can store and manage thousands of contract details (the goods and services defined in a contract or document). With UpsideContract's powerful search and inquiry functionality, users can easily retrieve a particular unique identifier along with all relevant supporting documents.

To ensure consistency is maintained across documents, utilize one of UpsideContract's most powerful features – alternatives. Alternatives allow users to create rules to automatically select or deselect certain clauses in a contract based on specific attributes of the contract. There are 5 main rule sets in UpsideContract that control the type of language used in a contract: jurisdictional, time-based, monetary value, UDFs (User Defined Fields), and optional alternatives. For example, if a National Provider Identifier (NPI) is selected, providers such as Medicaid and Medicare can be automatically listed and assigned to a NPI.

Security and Privacy Regulations

A major component of HIPAA is ensuring security measures are enforced and access to private information is restricted. Healthcare organizations must create physical safeguards, administrative policy safeguards and technical security procedures to adhere to regulations. UpsideContract helps to control the sharing of information by creating general user roles so each user can 'see and do' different things. Individuals can also be assigned varying levels of security access (with viewing, editing or deleting privileges) – as well, individuals may be classified according to their organizational unit.

UpsideContract can standardize and streamline administrative procedures through its flexible automated workflow feature. The workflow engine allows variables of a contract (i.e. monetary value, contract type, etc.) to determine which user roles or specific users will be automatically included in the approval process. This ensures that the proper checks and balances are in place for effective security management.

According to privacy regulations, the use of health information for non-medical purposes must be kept to a minimum. UpsideContract's iron-clad audit capabilities can track various activities such as user log-in times, total time, etc. To facilitate the dynamic nature of the workplace, UpsideContract has a flexible account deactivation feature as well as the ability to track activity by major component (such as contract header and performance metrics). A setting can also be turned on to track which documents have been printed and by whom.

Conclusion

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) has placed a great emphasis on the healthcare industry to be held accountable for the protection of private information while still providing accessibility and maintaining a level of administrative efficiency. Automating and standardizing processes will not only facilitate the duties and tasks of healthcare professionals but also provide improved care to patients. Implementing a contract management solution such as UpsideContract can help healthcare organizations control the vast amount of paperwork they encounter on a daily basis while remaining proactive in adhering to national standards and regulations. Upside Software currently serves several organizations in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industry including The Capital Health Region in Alberta, The Hospital Corporation of America, Rapid City Health, Detroit Medical and Community Care Physicians among others.

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