



HIPAA and People with Cancer

You may have heard the term “HIPAA” (pronounced “hip uh”) a lot lately. And you probably have been asked to sign a lot of HIPAA-related forms. If you’re like many people, you may not have understood what you were signing. The following information should help.

HIPAA stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, which Congress passed in 1996. Title I of HIPAA protects health insurance coverage for workers and their families when workers change or lose their jobs. Title II requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish national standards for electronic health care transactions. It also addresses the security and privacy of your health information.

HIPAA regulations protect your medical records and other individually identifiable health information, whether it is on paper, in computers or communicated orally. These privacy standards to protect your medical records and other health information took effect on April 14, 2003.

Here are some of the highlights of the HIPAA regulations:

- You have the right to see and obtain copies of your medical records and request corrections if you find errors. Health care providers have the right to charge you for the cost of copying and sending the records.
- You may ask the provider to restrict the use or disclosure of your information beyond the practices included in the notice. The provider, however, does not have to agree to the changes.
- Doctors, nurses and other health care providers may share information needed to treat you. In other situations, though, your personal health information generally may not be used for purposes not related to health care.
- Pharmacies, health plans and other covered entities must first obtain your specific authorization before disclosing patient information for marketing purposes.

You can request that your doctors, health plans and other covered entities take reasonable steps to ensure that their communications with you are confidential, such as not calling you at work or leaving messages on your answering machine.

The privacy regulations may restrict your loved ones’ access to your medical information. Speak with staff in your physician’s office or at your hospital to learn how HIPAA affects your loved ones’ abilities to assist you in your medical care.

For more information, visit www.hhs.gov/hipaa or call **1-866-627-7748**.

www.inova.org/cancer

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