



Protect MaineCare Members' Information

Protected Health Information (PHI)

PHI is any information about health status, health care, or payment for health care that can be linked to a specific individual.

PHI consists of:

- Names;
- All geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, ZIP code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a ZIP code if, according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census:
 - The geographic unit formed by combining all ZIP codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and
 - The initial three digits of a ZIP code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people are changed to “000.”
- All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death; and all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older;
- Telephone numbers;
- Fax numbers;
- Electronic mail addresses;
- Social Security numbers;
- Medical record numbers;
- Health plan beneficiary numbers;
- Account numbers;
- Certificate/license numbers;
- Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers;
- Device identifiers and serial numbers;
- Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);
- Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers;
- Biometric identifiers, including fingerprints and voiceprints;
- Full-face photographic images and any comparable images;
- Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code,
- Genetic information, including family history (new) and
- (ii) The covered entity does not have actual knowledge that the information could be used alone or in combination with other information to identify an individual who is a subject of the information.

Password Protect to Keep Patients' PHI Secure

If you do not have software that encrypts email, password protecting a Word or Excel document and attaching it to an email is more secure than including PHI to the body of the email.

When sending PHI in an email:

- Password protect all documents containing PHI
- Do not include any PHI in the subject line of the email
- Contact the intended recipient with the password to the secure document.
- Do not send the password in an email with the protected document.

For instructions on how to password protect a Word document or Excel workbook, visit the [Microsoft Office Support website](#). You can search “password protect a document” using the version of Microsoft Office you have in the search.

How to Password Protect a Word 2010 Document

*Instructions found on Microsoft website: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/support/>)

1. Click the **File** tab.
2. Click **Info**.
3. Click **Protect Document**, and then click **Encrypt with Password**.
4. In the **Encrypt Document** box, type a password, and then click **OK**.
5. In the **Confirm Password** box, type the password again, and then click **OK**.

Word 2007 and other versions of Word may differ in how a document is password protected. Remember to send the password to the recipient in a separate correspondence.

Fax Protocol for PHI

Sending Protected Health Information (PHI) in a password protected document is more secure than faxing. If you need to fax a document to MaineCare, please do the following:

- Notify the intended recipient that you have sent a fax.
- Use a fax cover sheet and do not include any PHI on the cover sheet.
- Identify the intended recipient on the cover sheet.