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Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act HIPAA

**Introduction**

Healthcare can be defined as the improvement and maintenance of health by not only preventing disease but also diagnosing and treating an illness that can either be physical or mental illness. Healthcare has always been the most debated topic worldwide. Specifically, discussing the US, the healthcare system is largely owned by the private sector. According to the report published in 2014 by the National Health Accounts US, the US spends more than $9000 on healthcare per capita (Medicare et al.). Healthcare is provided by both private and public healthcare coverage, for instance, Medicare and Medicaid. This paper will discuss a health care policy that is Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) its merits and the issues associated with it.

**Body**

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) was passed in 1996 by the federal government. The law created a mechanism for maintaining health insurance coverage when an individual is switching jobs while also establishing standards to manage the security and privacy of electronic health information (Mercuri 26). HIPAA aids in prohibiting insurers from defying an individual for pre-existing conditions that come under an employer-sponsored group health plan. Furthermore, the law makes the healthcare providers accountable for protecting an individual identifiable electronic health information.

Despite having several benefits many organizations in the US find HIPAA compliance very challenging. HIPAA requires that data of an individual’s health must be stored and remain available when needed and should be deleted permanently when the data storage is no longer required. However, most computers recycle bins does not meet this requirement and thus considered as a HIPAA violation.

Another challenge associated with HIPAA is that many organizations that manage the health records pf people often have business associates agreements. According to the HIPAA Omnibus rule business associates must all use PHI (protected Health Information) by the business associates while also putting limits on data sharing. This is a challenge as an organization that handles health information of people often partners with multiple associates so it is difficult to put a limit on data sharing. Additionally, technology system failures and lack of training of people are also some major challenges that organizations face while implementing HIPAA.

**Conclusion**

The implementation of HIPAA is a bit complex and often overwhelming. However, it has several benefits. Organizations must ensure that the staff is familiar with the HIPAA privacy rules and the consequences of noncompliance.

**Works Cited**

Mercuri, Rebecca T. "The HIPAA-potamus in health care data security." *Communications of the ACM* 47.7 (2004): 25-28.

Medicare, Centers for, et al. *NationalHealthAccountsHistorical*. 11 Dec. 2018, https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Statistics-Trends-and-Reports/NationalHealthExpendData/NationalHealthAccountsHistorical.html.