



# Privacy Policy

Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Inc. (NDHHS) endeavors to follow all privacy laws to the best of our ability. We never give out personal information without our client's written permission, unless required to by law. Our files are kept in secure, confidential locations.

## HIPAA policy

Although NDHHS does not request or keep confidential healthcare information unless deemed necessary, we do conform to the HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) policies of the healthcare organizations with which we work.

## Overview of the HIPAA Law

The following is from the [US Department of Health and Human Services](http://www.hhs.gov):

*The first-ever federal privacy standards to protect patients' medical records and other health information provided to health plans, doctors, hospitals and other health care providers took effect on April 14, 2003. Developed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), these new standards provide patients with access to their medical records and more control over how their personal health information is used and disclosed. They represent a uniform, federal floor of privacy protections for consumers across the country. State laws providing additional protections to consumers are not affected by this new rule.*

Congress called on HHS to issue patient privacy protections as part of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). HIPAA included provisions designed to encourage electronic transactions and also required new safeguards to protect the security and confidentiality of health information. The final regulation covers health plans, health care clearinghouses, and those health care providers who conduct certain financial and administrative transactions (e.g., enrollment, billing and eligibility verification) electronically. Most health insurers, pharmacies, doctors and other health care providers were required to comply with these federal standards beginning April 14, 2003. As provided by Congress, certain small health plans have an additional year to comply. HHS has conducted extensive outreach and provided guidance and technical assistance to these providers and businesses to make it as easy as possible for them to implement the new privacy protections. These efforts include answers to hundreds of common questions about the rule, as well as explanations and descriptions about key elements of the rule. These materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>