



# Cloud Communications for Healthcare



Today, many powerful business communication challenges face everyone in the healthcare chain—including clinics, hospitals, insurance providers and any other organization that transmits protected health information (PHI). With business communications transmitting PHI more frequently, it is critical for healthcare providers and their business associates to select a communications company that provides safe transmission and storage of data. High-profile breaches of patient health information are forcing security and compliance issues to the top of boardroom agendas. While industry executives scramble to respond, the federal government is stepping up enforcement and increasing penalties and fines. All this is occurring at a time when healthcare providers are under a microscope to cut costs.

Efforts to cut costs and improve workplace efficiency are driving all healthcare providers toward new technologies. Of course, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance is of paramount concern whenever PHI is communicated. 8x8 offers HIPAA-compliant business communications solutions that cut expenses, expand communication and collaboration capabilities, and keep data communications safe and secure.



## Are You Exposed?

Cyber attacks on healthcare enterprises are front-page news. Recent data breaches at companies like Anthem Blue Cross and WellPoint have exposed security weaknesses even among some of the most sophisticated healthcare providers. Attacks like these highlight the growing concern that data security represents for modern healthcare organizations.

Incidents of data breach in the healthcare sector rose 22% from 2010-2014.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the March 2015 Ponemon Institute study reports that cybercrime is the largest source of compromised PHI, surpassing lost devices and employee negligence. The report calls for industry members to invest capital in strategic defenses, despite executives reporting their budgets are stretched thin.<sup>2</sup>

What steps are you taking to protect your patients' personal information? Could your organization handle a sophisticated attack? Are all points of data storage secure, including your communications system?



## Compliance Affects You

In recent years, government enforcement of laws intended to protect personal health information has increased. In order to comply with HIPAA regulations, a healthcare provider must now execute a business associate agreement (BAA) with any vendor or service that has access to PHI—including everything from MRI and scanning machines that store patient results, to communications systems that store voicemail and chat messages. This means you are responsible for ensuring the compliance of any business associates who handle PHI on your behalf.<sup>3</sup>

What's more, exposure to prosecution has expanded. It's not just the federal government watching you. District attorneys can take action at the state level as well. In one case, a medical billing company that lost unencrypted data (data that was never exploited) settled with Health and Human Services for HIPAA/HITECH violations for \$2.5 million. This is small change compared to what followed. The company was prohibited by the state from doing business for a minimum of two years and a maximum of six, and paid out \$14 million in a class action suit brought by shareholders. Estimated costs were \$2,000 to \$6,000 per record. The CEO and CFO were replaced.<sup>4</sup>

Your best defense against HIPAA breaches is to work with recognized third-party-validated HIPAA compliant providers. In addition, you should insist upon tailored Business Associate Agreements from companies that are experienced in providing HIPAA-compliant solutions.

## Improving Healthcare Communications with 8x8


US healthcare costs are rising exponentially. Expected to exceed \$2.8 trillion in 2015, healthcare delivery will top 20% of GNP.<sup>5</sup> Government regulation, limited Medicare funding and low payment rates drive healthcare providers to seek cost-cutting measures in order to survive.

One way that healthcare providers can better control their costs is to move their communications systems to the cloud. This takes away the burden and expense of managing on-premises equipment, and helps you keep up with the latest technological advancements. 8x8 offers superior, unified, cloud-based communication and collaboration solutions that increase staff efficiency, eliminate the need to manage on-site systems, and enhance the patient experience. 8x8 ensures that its solutions are secure and compliant, to meet the needs of today's healthcare providers.




## Better, Safer Communications


Many companies are wary of moving away from on-premises systems to the cloud. They tend to equate proximity with safety and control. In fact, most IT groups are responsible for a complex environment filled with a variety of non-conforming legacy systems, applications and servers. Transition to the cloud can bring your communications system into a secure, homogenous, hosted environment of modern servers where anomalies are easier to see and risks are easier to identify. 8x8 data centers are:

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- Externally certified to meet SSAE 16 standards, or similar international standards
  - Ranked in top 20% of Cloud Services by Enterprise-Ready Cloud Trust™ Ratings
  - Encrypted as appropriate with state-of-the-art data protection
  - Subjected to continuous monitoring and surveillance
  - Protected by secure authentication

We are the only cloud provider of unified communications and contact center solutions that advertises third-party-verified HIPAA-compliant solutions and also offers tailored BAAs to companies of all sizes—without requiring excessive contractual obligations. Evidence of the company's commitment includes:

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- Every service has been engineered to be, HIPAA-compliant
  - We can provide customers with a tailored Business Associate Agreement (BAA)
  - Our in-house compliance office is headed by Michael McAlpen, a recognized compliance and security expert in healthcare
  - Each employee is required to be trained in HIPAA compliance

8x8 is a vanguard in providing cost-effective, cloud-based solutions without sacrificing robust communications for the healthcare ecosystem. Our extensive suite of unified communications includes:

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- IP telephony calling and management (VoIP) that increases employee connectivity, while typically reducing costs 30 to 40 percent
  - Unified messaging, email, fax and voice messaging, providing employees with multiple ways to connect
  - Presence technology that lets professionals and staff know who is available at any time
  - Meeting technology to enhance collaboration among staff and patients
  - Contact center capabilities to improve patient relationships
  - Securely transmitted instant messaging

With 8x8 communications solutions, you can make your caregivers easier to reach—without worrying that communications will compromise PHI security, and you can improve care while increasing productivity and revenue opportunities.

## Safer and More Efficient

Healthcare providers are being buffeted by a variety of forces in the marketplace. Increasingly sophisticated attacks on data security, stepped-up enforcement of compliance rules and the need to cut costs, highlight the importance of keeping communications safe, compliant and efficient. If you are thinking of upgrading your system soon, the time to act is now, and the company to meet your needs is 8x8.

8x8 provides you with the most secure public-cloud communications solutions available. We are the only cloud communications provider to advertise third-party verified HIPAA-compliant solutions and offer tailored BAAs to companies of all sizes—without requiring excessive contractual obligations.

8x8 is uniquely capable to provide third-party-verified compliance with HIPAA, PCI-DSS 3.1, FISMA/FIPS 140-2 and Safe Harbor regulations. If you are concerned about compatibility, we provide you with broadly integrated, secure and compliant cloud-based technology that works together with all popular devices seamlessly. 8x8 was the first cloud communications provider to offer an SLA guaranteeing both call quality and 99.99% uptime on a wide variety of broadband networks. And, for companies that desire it, we facilitate global collaboration with an extensive international network.

Call Now at  
1.866.862.2811



Learn how 8x8's cloud communications and collaboration solutions can secure your communications, or visit us at [www.8x8.com](http://www.8x8.com).

<sup>1</sup> Ponemon Institute, Fifth Annual Benchmark Study on Privacy & Security of Healthcare Data, May, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services, HITECH Act, Final Rule, March, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Health & Human Services, 'Stolen Laptops Lead to Important HIPAA Settlements.'

<sup>5</sup> Health Care Costs 101: Slow Growth Persists, Katherine B. Wilson, California Health Care Almanac, 2014.