

THE ADVISOR

MONTHLY COMPLIANCE COMMUNICATOR

[Website Privacy Policies & HIPAA's Notice of Privacy Practices](#)

If you have spent any time on the Internet, you have been asked what you would like a website to do with its cookies. A cookie is information saved by your web browser. Cookies are like flags that allow a website to recognize and remember your device if you return to that site in the future. Some cookies can also keep track of your device over time.

Website owners are required to tell visitors what kind of cookies they use, as well as how they use and disclose the visitor's information collected by their website. There are additional legal requirements for websites that ask visitors to enter personal or financial information, and requirements on how to treat information of minors under 13 years old.

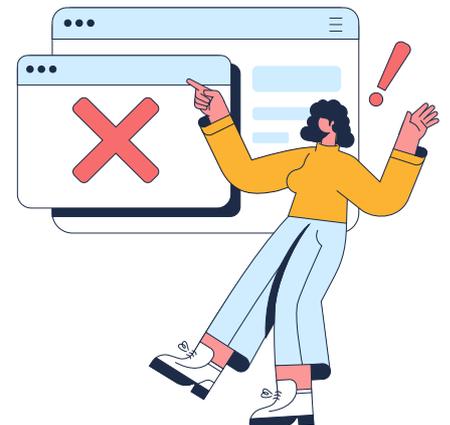
Newsletter Content

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[IT'S YOUR CALL](#)

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HIPAA COMPLIANCE

Websites typically have a privacy policy that outlines requirements like these which is usually available through a link at the bottom of the website. This kind of privacy policy applies to everyone who visits the website regardless of whether the visitor ever becomes a customer.



The Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP), that is required by HIPAA, serves a separate but similar purpose. An NPP applies only to the patients of a practice. It outlines a patient's privacy rights and how the practice uses, discloses, and secures the patient's protected health information (PHI). The NPP must contain certain information and be written in plain language. This means that it should be understood by those with basic reading skills. A patient must be provided a copy of the NPP prior to their first treatment, except in an emergency. A copy of the NPP must be provided to anyone who asks for it, and it must be posted in a prominent location inside the practice, like the waiting room.

If your practice has a website, the current NPP must be posted in a noticeable location there, too. In its 2016-2017 HIPAA Audits Industry Report, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) provided a few examples of what a prominent location on a website might be:

- Through a drop-down menu on the home page.
- On the top or bottom of the home page as a designated link (e.g., a direct link from the home page named "HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices" or something similar, to avoid confusion with the website's general privacy policy).

In general, a patient should not need to click more than twice from a practice's home page to find the NPP. The OCR's report made it clear that the NPP and general privacy documents should not be combined.

TMC clients can download a customizable sample NPP and related forms like the patient acknowledgement of receipt of NPP in the Client Portal.

OSHA COMPLIANCE

OSHA & Workplace Stress

In a recent Google search for adjectives to describe the world's experience with the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the illness COVID-19, there was quite a range of emotions voiced.

Some of the descriptive terms included: frightening, enlightening, paralyzing, loss, fear, and gain. Whatever term or terms you might use, the word stressful does come to mind. Anecdotal reports from our clients

indicate that both patients and workers have felt the impact of this pandemic, and for many the impact has affected their overall sense of well-being.



OSHA has dedicated a page under Safety and Health Topics, [Workplace Stress](#), [Make Work Better](#), [Mental Health Matters](#), which provides a great deal of insight into this important topic. The following statistics from the OSHA website shed light on the magnitude of workplace stress and its impact on a worker's mental health:

- Nearly one in five US adults live with a mental illness.
- Workplace stress has been reported to cause 120,000 deaths in the US each year.
- Approximately 65% of U.S. workers surveyed have characterized work as being a very significant or somewhat significant source of stress in each year from 2019-2021.
- 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress.
- 54% of workers report that work stress affects their home life.

OSHA COMPLIANCE

It is also noted that workplace stress and poor mental health can negatively affect workers through:

- Job performance
- Productivity
- Work engagement and communication
- Physical capability and daily functioning

The way stress can present in different individuals is outlined in the document [Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace](#). Examples included the following behaviors:

- Irritation, anger, denial
- Feeling nervous or anxious
- Lacking motivation
- Feeling sad or depressed
- Submitting poor-quality work
- Getting into conflicts at work
- Having trouble sleeping or focusing
- Tired, overwhelmed, or burned out
- Trouble completing tasks or meeting deadlines



While it does seem to be a significant challenge, there are many practical suggestions provided to ease some of the stress individual workers may be experiencing:

- Check in with workers frequently and ask them how they are doing. Offer to support them in any way that you can.
- Talk about the specific stressors that relate to healthcare. Short staffing and frustrated patients can make an impact and increase the level of stress in the office.
- Share statistics of how stress is impacting everyone in the workplace. This will let workers know they are not alone in their feelings.

Click to view the '[Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace](#)' document

OSHA COMPLIANCE

- Implement an “open door” policy so that workers know they can discuss their concerns.
- Identify opportunities to reduce stress at work. These may include reassigning work, allowing more time to complete tasks, offer additional training and/or tools to assist with workflow, and establishing a time that the workday ends.

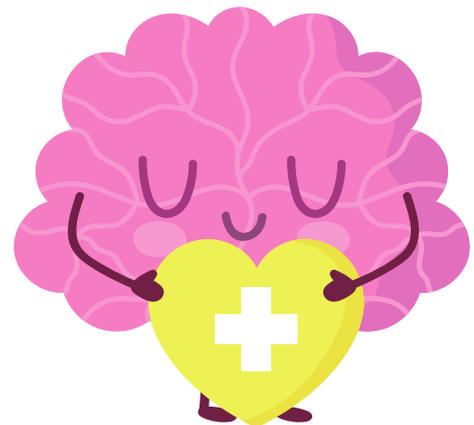
It is also important for each worker to take time to take care of themselves. While all the suggestions may seem like a commonsense approach, it does take commitment to steal away time to focus on you! Self-care activities include:

- Exercising and eating healthy.
- Visiting with friends.
- Establishing a regular sleep schedule.
- Talking with a close friend or family member.

We are entering what is known as “the most wonderful time of the year,” but, if honesty prevails, it is not without stress! Take time now to outline how you can determine which activities will bring you joy and those which may bring undue stress and, when possible, move toward the joyful activities.

If you would like more information, the following links lead to important resources:

- [Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace Getting Started Guide for Front-Line Supervisors](#)
- [Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
- [My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?](#)



My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

For help finding treatment, visit nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

If you are in crisis, call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org, or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).

COMPLIANCES

Infection Control Bites

The common precautions to take to reduce the spread of Covid-19, influenza and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) are:

- Avoid contact with those who are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for a minimum 20 seconds.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated frequently.
- Get influenza and Covid-19 vaccines to reduce the risk of serious illness.



HIPAA: IT'S YOUR CALL

TRUE or FALSE: If a practice has a website, a current copy of its HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices (NPP) must be available there.

THE ANSWER?
CLICK HERE!



SECURITY SCOUT

Password Safety

Watch where you put that password!

As outlined in last month's Security Scout, always use long, strong passphrases/passwords and different passwords for each program and device.

In addition, NEVER:

- 1) Write passwords on sticky-notes or in notebooks, or
- 2) Share them with others.

Another critical step is to immediately change the default/factory password to a long, strong passphrase/password! This will help protect all new equipment from unauthorized access and help avoid a costly breach.

Avoid storing passwords in Internet browsers like Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Safari, etc. Instead, consider using a secure password management tool to help make creating and managing these passphrases/passwords easier.

Many reputable password managers are free or are available at a very low cost. You can search "password manager" but it can be a daunting task to pick from what is available. If you do not have an IT manager to help you select a product, visit a reputable tech-advice website such as [CNET](#) or [TechRadar](#) and review their recommendations.

Resources:

- [Need a LastPass Alternative? This Is the Best Free Password Manager We've Found - CNET](#)
- [Best Password Managers of 2022 | TechRadar](#)



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PRINT

SIGNATURE

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Instructions

Print and post newsletter in office for staff review. Each member should sign this form when completed. Keep on file as proof of training on these topics.

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Need to contact us? Scan the QR code for all the ways to get in touch!