

Protected Health Information (PHI)

The Privacy Rule protects all **individually identifiable health information** held or transmitted by a health care provider or its business associate, in any form or media, whether electronic, paper, or oral. The Privacy Rule calls this information "**protected health information**," or PHI.

The Privacy Rule defines "individually identifiable health information" as information, including demographic data, that:

- Identifies the individual, or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe it can be used to identify the individual; **and**
- Relates to:
 - The individual's past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition;
 - The provision of health care to the individual; **or**
 - The past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual.

Individually identifiable health information includes many common identifiers, such as **names, addresses, birth dates, and Social Security Numbers**.

Note: Among other things, the Privacy Rule excludes from protected health information employment records that a health care provider maintains in its capacity as an employer.

[Click here](#) to learn more about PHI.