



**March 2020**

## **COVID-19 Remote Work and HIPAA Privacy & Security Guidelines for CONTRACTORS**

During the COVID-19 Nationwide Public Health Emergency, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency contractors authorized to work remotely who access Protected Health Information (PHI) or electronic PHI (ePHI) must remain compliant with health privacy regulations by following these best practices:

### **Personal Devices (Computers, Phones, Tablets, etc.)**

- Your computer / tablet / other electronic device must be either:
  - Issued by your employer **OR**
  - A personal device that does not share a login with another person AND is password protected (ideally use multi-factor authentication).
- Have your Information Systems department configure your personal device for optimum security (encryption, antiviral software, etc.) if possible.
- Do not use file sharing applications or download unfamiliar software.
- Auto-time out your screen, “lock” your device if you are stepping away from your computer or mobile device, and logout of your account when you are not using it.
- Do not download or save any PHI to your personal devices, including hard drives, flash drives (i.e., USB, thumb drive, etc.).
- Do not store your work account username or password in your internet browser.
- Do not share your work account username or password.

### **Internet Connection & Electronic Transmission of ePHI**

- Only use secured (i.e., password protected) Wi-Fi network.
- Use your designated Virtual Private Network (e.g., Citrix) to access ePHI.
- Encrypt email with ePHI.
- Do not use your personal email/social media accounts to send ePHI.

### **Physical Work Setting**

- Ensure only you can view PHI/ePHI (i.e. shield your screen from secondary viewers).
- Protect conversation containing PHI from being overheard.

### **Paper Protected Health Information (PHI)**

- Do not print any PHI.
- If you bring any PHI home, ensure that it is in a locked location when not in use.
- Do not leave PHI (including devices with PHI) in a vehicle unattended at any time.
- If you need to discard PHI, use a shredder or discard in a locked shredded bin.

**Please report any unauthorized access, use, or disclosure of PHI/ePHI immediately to your agency Privacy Officer and your Alameda County HIPAA Privacy contact.**