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Communicating Safely with HIPAA-compliant Coordinated Care

It is imperative for healthcare teams to collaborate closely and exchange information to benefit their patients, while properly adhering to the strict guidelines set forth by HIPAA

Effective communication is vital in the healthcare sector, particularly when it comes to coordinated care.

Collaborative communication relies on all parties involved sharing precise information promptly. It entails open discussions to ensure that everyone is well-informed and aligned to provide quality collaborative care.

HIPAA-compliant collaborative team communication helps providers to provide safe and effective care in today's modern healthcare environment.

Collaborative Communication Matters

Effective communication is of utmost importance in the healthcare industry. In the present scenario, patients often receive medical care from various providers. If these providers fail to collaborate, patients may face adverse consequences.

Research confirms that collaborative care helps to improve patient quality of care through data organization and sharing.

According to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, patients are often referred to various facilities with different processes and systems, coordinated care allows the sharing of valuable information about patients' health with members involved with caring for these patients.

According to the Centers for Madicare and Medicaid Services, the lack of coordinated care can lead to the patient experiencing unecessary and repeat tests, increased use of emergency care, medication errors, poor care transition, and more.

Proper care in today's digital landscape often requires a collaborative approach amongs healthcare providers, but patient privacy is at stake during this process.

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HIPAA regulations are implemented to safeguard the confidentiality of patients' private data. They facilitate secure collaborative communication among healthcare providers.

According to HIPAA's privacy rule, relevant clinical information can be shared among a patient's current treatment providers without requiring written authorization.

Collaborative Care with HIPAA

The privacy rule encompasses electronic forms of communication, including text messages, emails, video conferences, and internet-based telephone conversations. Consequently, these messages should be safeguarded through protective measures like encryption.

Avoiding Penalties from Non-compliance

Communicating with patients or members of their care team outside of a HIPAA-compliant channel can lead to steep fines.

> *Since the adoption of the HIPAA Omnibus Rules by the Department of Health and Human Services, providers can face steep fines up to $50,000 per incident according to a 4-tier penalties structure.* *HIPAA Journal*

Ensuring HIPAA Compliant Communications

The law surrounding healthcare communications is dynamic and undergoes changes over time. Unfortunately, it does not establish a specific certification standard. Surprisingly, it can be relatively effortless to inadvertently violate HIPAA regulations for these reasons.

Violations of HIPAA not only damage the reputation of healthcare providers but also erode patient trust. Providers must be careful to protect their reputations.

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HIPAA has undergone revisions to accommodate advancements in technology and evolving societal circumstances.

HIPAA is Very Dynamic

A notable instance of the dynamics involved in enforcing HIPAA was witnessed during the 2020 COVID-19 health crisis. During this time, the US government temporarily eased HIPAA regulations to enable remote patient treatment from home.

No Standard HIPAA Certification Exists

HIPAA does not establish a universal standard or implementation specification for certifying an organization as compliant. Furthermore, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) does not mandate proof of HIPAA compliance. To address this gap, various third-party organizations have developed HIPAA compliance programs. Therefore, when an organization asserts its HIPAA compliance, it means it has obtained certification from a third-party entity rather than directly from HHS.

How does a provider manage safe communications given these challenges?

In the midst of uncertainty regarding HIPAA-compliance, the solution lies in utilizing a cloud communications platform. These platforms offer a comprehensive solution by providing various collaboration tools such as video, phone, chat, fax, and file-sharing within a unified communication system as a service (UCaaS).

Ensuring HIPAA compliance necessitates remaining informed about modifications in the law, placing an additional burden on healthcare providers whose primary expertise lies in patient care, not policy.

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Secure Unified Communication Services

Here is a compilation of their included security features:

- Comprehensive security layers spanning physical, digital, organizational.
- Continuous 24/7 monitoring.
- Guaranteed uptime of services.
- Encryption using Transportation Layer Security and Secure Real-Time Transport Protocol between all voice endpoints.
- System monitoring including implementation of firewalls, border session controllers, intrusion detection systems, fraud analytics, system hardening, and vulnerability scans.

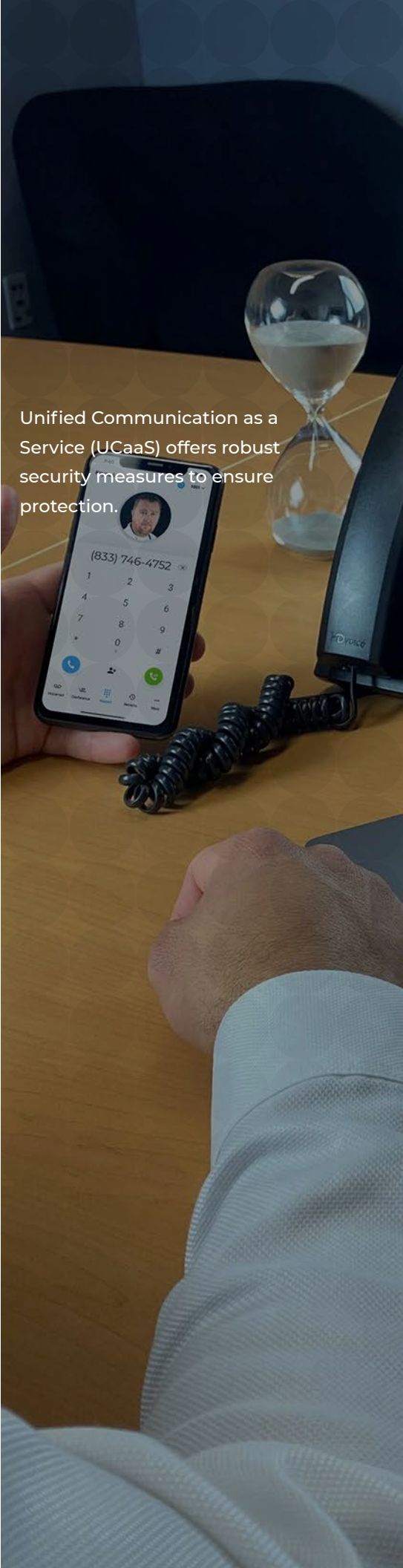**RingPlan Offers the Highest Level of Physical Security**

Leading cloud communications platforms prioritize the highest standards of physical and environmental security. The data centers responsible for running these platforms are fortified with robust electronic prevention systems, onsite engineering specialists, and security personnel. Additionally, the strategic placement of data centers in various geographical locations minimizes the risks associated with data loss and service disruption.

These advanced security measures align with the guidelines for HIPAA-compliant communications, offering providers and patients a sense of assurance.

RingPlan's Unified Communication platform is hosted by Switch Networks, recognized as the world's largest and most secure exascale data center ecosystem.

Switch's prestigious facilities are trusted by government agencies and prominent businesses due to their unparalleled security measures, including military-grade security protocols, onsite fire brigades, a guaranteed 100% power uptime, a 24-hour control center, and stringent access controls.

Unified Communication as a Service (UCaaS) offers robust security measures to ensure protection.

RingPlan Supports HIPAA Compliance

We care about collaborative care.

RingPlan merges communication with innovation to offer a powerful, secure, and nationwide cloud communications platform encompassing phone, text messaging, video, and fax.

Our everyday commitment revolves around assisting healthcare organizations in enhancing collaboration, boosting productivity, and ultimately achieving improved patient outcomes.

Contact RingPlan Today:

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RingPlan wants to enhance the quality of patient and member experiences within your healthcare program while simultaneously reducing costs through the utilization of advanced and secure cloud communications.

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