

# Traditional health workers

## Confidentiality and HIPAA

By the nature of their role, traditional health workers (THWs) manage sensitive information about clients and communities. THW practice relies on laws and protocols to guide their decisions about how to handle client information. One of the most important laws established to protect the privacy and confidentiality of health information is commonly referred to as HIPAA, also known as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

THWs must adhere to the HIPAA Privacy and Security regulations because they transmit and receive health information and have contact with individually identifiable health information. As such, THW programs must be HIPAA compliant.

## What does it mean to be HIPAA compliant?

HIPAA compliance involves implementing and maintaining adherence to HIPAA requirements, including physical, network and process security measures.

These include:

- Drafting and distributing policies, authorization forms and other HIPAA-required documents regarding how health information is used and protected.
- Encrypting emails that contain sensitive data.
- Avoiding faxing confidential information.
- Using passwords to restrict access to electronic protected health information.
- Turning monitors so they're not visible to others while working with electronic protected health information.
- Logging off computer systems when leaving the work area.

For HIPAA resources click [link.careoregon.org/hhs-hipaa-training](https://link.careoregon.org/hhs-hipaa-training)