

# Raphael Health Center: HIPAA Security Risk Analysis Results in Tighter Data Security and Additional Government Funding

Healthcare organizations, especially those operating primarily on funds and grant money from the government, are under a great deal of pressure to comply with the HIPAA Security Rule as a safeguard against technical breaches in protected patient information. Raphael Health Center took a proactive approach by conducting a complete HIPAA security risk analysis for all HIPAA security standards. They responded to gaps in their system by implementing new procedures that would eliminate the risk of a data breach. As a result, the organization was able to obtain additional government funds and ensure tighter data control. This case study outlines the steps Raphael Health Center and its IT partner, Appnuity, a division of enVista, took to mitigate potential risks to private patient information. It also demonstrates how federally qualified healthcare centers benefit from conducting the required HIPAA security risk analysis and by implementing proper policies and procedures to ensure the highest level of patient data security.

## The Company

Raphael Health Center is a faith-based, not-for-profit, federally qualified health center in Indianapolis that has been providing primary and preventive medical and dental services and programs since 1994. In addition, they offer outreach for women and children, diagnostic laboratory services, a pharmacy, specialty care, health and nutrition education and counseling, psychosocial assessments, treatment and referrals, and transportation assistance. Raphael Health Center accepts Medicaid, Medicare and commercial insurance. They also offer a self-pay program with sliding scale options for the uninsured living at less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

## The Opportunity

Since Raphael Health Center is a federally qualified health center, they operate primarily through government funding. In order to comply with healthcare industry standards and the standards and specifications stated in the HIPAA Security Rule, healthcare entities are required to evaluate risks and vulnerabilities within their environments and to implement appropriate security

measures to protect against reasonably anticipated threats or hazards to the security or integrity of patient information. This exercise would also enable the healthcare center to remain eligible for additional funding and grant money.

Raphael Health Center has always been compliant with HIPAA non-security rules, including manual procedures for ensuring the protection of patient information. However, it is mandatory for healthcare organizations to assess potential electronic and technology data breaches and to make any necessary changes to comply with government regulations for safeguarding confidential information.

Raphael Health Center selected its existing IT Consulting firm, Appnuity, to perform the HIPAA security risk analysis. Appnuity manages Raphael's IT environment so, in addition to a trusted partnership, Appnuity was already familiar with their system.



## Appnuity's Solution

Appnuity recommended that Raphael Health Center not just meet the minimum requirements set forth by the government, but also perform a full HIPAA security risk analysis on all HIPAA safeguards. By doing so, Raphael would comply with the same HIPAA security rules hospitals are required to follow.

The security risk analysis consisted of a series of questions related to technology risks and how electronic patient information is protected. From that questionnaire, actual risk worksheets were created to assess the level and likelihood of each of approximately 60 risks that are measured. This procedure enabled Appnuity to determine the gaps within their physical, electronic, verbal and written security. Gaps that did not require additional costs or processes were resolved during the risk discovery phase.

Appnuity then provided an executive summary outlining the findings of the security risk analysis, as well as options to close the remaining gaps. In addition, Appnuity also wrote all of Raphael's policies and procedures for HIPAA security.

Upon completion of the HIPAA security risk analysis, Raphael Health Center submitted both the findings and their plans for resolution to the government.

## The Results

After Appnuity identified all security risks, Raphael Health Center began the process of implementing new policies and procedures designed to eliminate them. By complying with the HIPAA Security Rule, Raphael was able to secure additional funding. These new operating standards will also likely give Raphael Health Center a competitive edge in the future when it comes to receiving more grant money and special funding. Most importantly, the center's patients can rest assured that their private medical information is protected at the highest level required by law.

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