

Very real tears welled up as the video camera rolled, capturing the touching story of the medical miracle in front of the lens.

It was the kind of story that needed to be told, and once it was...the video made an immediate impact and was shared again and again.

And no, it wasn't put out by a medical provider with millions set aside for marketing. The local clinic shot it on a low budget, and the return was tremendous.

Digital marketing has opened up the very real possibility of your private practice showing up next to the industry giants. But what about that little thing called patient privacy?

It's my goal to change your thinking around HIPAA, seeing it as an opportunity instead of a hurdle to your success.

Let's get started...

## HIPAA Marketing Rules <H2>

Before we go any further, it's worth noting that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 has its place in our society.

Platforms like Google and social media giants could stand to have something like it in place to protect user data.

Having worked in healthcare myself, I know that despite this...most non-medical (and some medical) folks don't understand it.

Especially in the context of messaging they put out online and in person.

According to the [U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#), a HIPAA disclosure for marketing is required during any:

“communication about a product or service that encourages recipients of the communication to purchase or use the product or service.”

What's an example of this? A social media post that talks about the deal being offered at another facility you partner with for radiology services.

Are there any exemptions, or do you have to remember to get a signed release *every* time?

Forms of marketing in healthcare that do not violate HIPAA:

1. Relating news about your own products or services
  - A new practitioner that started at your practice, or recently added medical equipment
2. Treatment related communication
  - Specialist referral or free medication samples
3. Care coordination or alternative treatment recommendations
  - Sharing patient's record with several medical programs to find an ideal fit

As you can see, these rules leave the door open for a healthcare freelance marketing professional to reach your ideal prospects.

This should be causing some excitement...and I'll tell you why next.

## HIPAA and Healthcare Marketing <H2>

Okay, are you ready for some really good news?

Blogs and social media that offer value and don't mention any specific patient case studies are fair game for your content marketing strategy.

I'll wait while you finish celebrating...

HIPAA and health systems marketing can run smoothly, even if you regularly share patient success stories as a means of encouraging prospects to call your practice.

Instead of treading softly around digital marketing activities, simply focus on:

- Handling authorizations for marketing
- Protecting the data of your patients

The number one way to mitigate the risk of any marketing HIPAA violations...get a signed patient release.

Even if you don't end up needing to use it, having that security will increase your confidence around future communication.

It's my goal here to offer actionable ways to diminish any potential risk. If you've read this far, I can safely assume that's your goal as well!

Steps:

1. Establish a policy on proper use of PHI in all marketing activities
2. Achieve practice wide buy-in on the policy
3. Record instances where PHI was used in marketing campaigns
4. Create an easy way for patients to either opt-in or opt-out of marketing
5. Supervise implementation

Odds are, you've worked hard to create a company culture that offers your patients the absolute highest level of professionalism and care.

As you are the face of the practice, personally champion this policy and encourage adoption with each new staff member. Your excitement around it will have a ripple effect, and facilitate access to regular content for use in your promotional efforts.

## Marketing Strategies Compliant with HIPAA <H2>

Social media is one way to get patients more involved in their own healthcare. Of course there's other major benefits for your top goal of growing the practice.

Some tips when using it:

- Use stock photography instead of photos from staff
- Initiate controls to flag certain keywords or phrases

You've probably heard cases where a medical professional innocently snapped a photo on the job, and posted it online. Unbeknownst to them, a patient chart was visible in the background.

Generic images from [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) and [Unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com) guarantee you won't ever have to worry about becoming a case study on what **NOT** to do.

Notifications can alert you if there's a question whether a scheduled post is compliant. Preventing any unnecessary negative publicity is always a worthwhile pursuit!

Your medical practice website is the "headquarters" of your entire digital marketing infrastructure and needs a concentrated effort to ensure compliance.

A few tips to pay attention to:

- Involve a compliance officer if you have one
- Encrypt data with HIPAA compliant CRM software

With an eye for catching possible violations, your compliance officer should conduct a website audit from time to time. This is why you hired them after all, right?

Finally, do your due diligence and search out one of many CRM (customer relationship management) systems. Capterra has a [helpful list](#) to compare the options.

Ready to take your content marketing to another level?

## Elijah Wordsmith and HIPAA Healthcare Marketing <H2>

Hopefully, over the course of reading any apprehension you initially held around this subject matter has dissipated to a barely recognizable level.

As I've pointed out, HIPAA doesn't need to hold you back from leveraging modern digital marketing tools to your advantage.

My freelance writing business is backed by industry experience in both healthcare and digital marketing. Combining the two allows each original blog or social media post to resonate with your target audience.

With access to modern technology and customer service sharpened while working in busy medical offices, I bring a personable approach to growing your online presence.

My promise is to deliver content on time that requires very little (if any) editing the very first time you see it.

[Schedule an introduction call](#) to see if I'm the right fit to help you win in the healthcare industry.