



Overseas Labor

Many health care providers are, unknowingly, outsourcing to unregulated overseas labor

In 2009, IT employees overseas sold hundreds of medical records on the black market costing facilities millions. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case. Over the past decade, there have been numerous accusations and cases involving the safety of voice files and medical records sent overseas by US vendors. Thousands of patients have had their personal information compromised based on these breaches, exposing medical facilities to substantial liability.

While a privacy breach of this magnitude is unfortunate, even more unfortunate is that this devastating incident could have been avoided. These breaches of privacy expose a level of irresponsibility that exists when some transcription companies focus primarily on their profitability rather than maintaining and monitoring proper security procedures. Many transcription service companies have been outsourcing overseas without conducting the slightest due diligence concerning their subcontractors and the subcontractors' employees. Making matters worse, instead of addressing these security shortcomings, many companies have launched aggressive marketing campaigns that boast about being 'US Based' in an attempt to hide their shortfalls. But what does 'US based' really mean to a healthcare provider? Many vendors are only 'US based' by technicality. For example, while they have a US address, the majority of their staff is overseas. These vendors attempt to disguise the fact that their services are outsourced overseas. Therefore it is extremely important for healthcare administrators to ask pertinent questions when interviewing medical transcription service companies. Many health care providers are, unknowingly, outsourcing to unregulated overseas labor.

In order to significantly reduce risk, below are several questions which will help differentiate vendors who are only US based vs. those that are 100% US staffed.

1. Does the vendor outsource any aspect of their operations overseas?
2. Where is the client services center located?
3. How many full time and part time healthcare documentation specialists are employed by the company?
4. Does the vendor utilize sub-contractors? If so, what level of security access are they granted?
5. How does the vendor maintain and monitor HIPAA compliance?
6. Is the vendor willing to put all answers about their staff, service center and HIPAA compliance in the contract?

When choosing a vendor partner, you want to work with an organization that is "100% US Staffed", not simply "US Based". This critical difference can significantly impact the services you receive.

Not sure which type of firm you are dealing with? If your facility has seen any of the following occurrences, your vendor may be sending work overseas.

- Multiple blanks and misspelled words
- Consistently missed turnaround times
- Difficulty verifying pricing and/or hidden costs
- Lack of automated technology
- Difficulty in contacting and communicating with client services



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