



## FAQs Business Associates

When SiteRx partners with a provider, we sign a [Business Associate Agreement](#) and become an extension of the provider to perform defined services on behalf of the practice. Data security and maintaining compliance with healthcare legislation is of the highest concern at SiteRx!

**SiteRx is proud to have completed** the [Accountable HIPAA Compliance](#) verification. This is an involved process to ensure full compliance with the following regulations:

- HIPAA Privacy Rule
- HIPAA Security Rule
- HITECH Rule
- Omnibus Rule



### **What is a HIPAA Business Associate?**

A HIPAA Business Associate (BA) is defined as an individual or organization (SiteRx) that provides a service to a covered entity (medical practice) that requires them to create, store or disclose protected health information (PHI). HIPAA sets standards for how this type of identifiable information should be kept private and secure by all those who access it within the healthcare industry. **Therefore, since BAs use PHI in the course of their work just as covered entities do, they too are required to comply with the requirements of HIPAA.**

### **Examples of Business Associates**

Today almost all medical practices work with business associates. The business of medicine requires lots of supporting vendors and if these vendors touch PHI, they must sign a BAA. As mentioned above, a business associate is any person or organization that performs a service on behalf of a covered entity that involves them accessing some form of PHI along the way. BA organizations can be in the administrative, technology, service industries or anywhere in between. Examples:

- Medical Billing Companies
- Electronic Medical Records Companies
- Medical Transcription Services
- IT Vendors (SiteRx)

## What do Business Associates Need to be HIPAA Compliant?

It's not just healthcare providers that need to comply with HIPAA, their vendors (SiteRx) must be compliant too. But what do they need to do to be considered HIPAA Compliant?

### Compliance Extended to Business Associates

In 2013, the [HIPAA Omnibus Rule](#) was passed which changed the standards for what HIPAA Business Associate compliance looks like. The rule re-defined what a BA is but also expanded the responsibilities of compliance from the Privacy and Security rules to BAs rather than just covered entities (CEs). This means that if a vendor (SiteRx) provides any form of business service on behalf of a provider, then they are directly liable for any breaches that occur on your end. It is important that BAs are held to the same compliance standards as there are lots more business associates than covered entities and PHI must be protected by every last one.

### Business Associate Agreements (BAAs)

A [business associate agreement](#) is an agreement between a BA and a CE that lays out each party's responsibilities and obligations when it comes to securing PHI. HIPAA states that covered entities should only work with BAs once this written arrangement has been signed so that there is an assurance that the PHI will be protected. When the HIPAA Omnibus Rule extended the requirements onto business associates, it also meant that the OCR could audit BAs for noncompliance which can have costly consequences.

There are a few key items that Business Associates are agreeing to do by signing BAAs with the covered entities they work with.

1. They are **guaranteeing** that they will only use or disclose protected health information in the permitted ways that the covered entity has laid out. To ensure this they will put appropriate safeguards into place to prevent unauthorized usage.
2. Additionally, they are **agreeing to be HIPAA compliant** in all aspects and to sign business associate agreements with any subcontractors.

### Achieving Compliance

While the process is very detailed, obtaining HIPAA compliance tells our practices and patients that SiteRx can be trusted to protect their information carefully!

Reference Source: <https://www.accountablehq.com/post/hipaa-compliance-for-business-associates>