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Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The primary purpose of HIPAA is to enhance health insurance accessibility for people changing employers or leaving the workforce. Provisions were also designed to encourage transmission of confidential health care data electronically, streamlining claims transactions. In return for legislating significant savings for health plans and providers, Congress imposed a series of privacy and security requirements to assure that electronically transmitted data would remain confidential and secure. In addition, Congress and privacy advocates (including physicians) were concerned that the growing use of electronic means to transmit healthcare data increased the risk to the public that the data would be compromised. Many members of the public have acknowledged that they have withheld information from a physician out of concern for security of their records and many physicians report that they have similarly failed to record certain information in the medical record due to the same fear. Standardization of privacy regulations was enacted.

Privacy standards include many mandates, including the following:

- Uniform electronic transaction standards for healthcare data.
- Privacy and confidentiality provisions. Medical practices must obtain specific authorization from patients before they may use or disclose information in many circumstances.
- Security procedures to protect electronically maintained health information
- Medical practices will generally need to provide patients with written notice of their office's privacy practices and the patients' privacy rights.
- In general, patients will be able to access their personal medical records, and to request changes to correct any errors. Patients may generally request an accounting of non-routine uses and disclosures of their health information.

Coastal Medical and Cosmetic Dermatology has always been committed to ensuring confidentiality and privacy of records and related information for all patients. When sharing private information, it must be verified that the recipient has the right and the need for the information. Only the information necessary for the required purpose is disclosed.