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Protecting Patient Data: How WM is Helping Hospitals Safeguard Patient Privacy

5 Hospital Records That Risk Patient Safety

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Patient privacy depends on more than digital safeguards. Healthcare organizations manage highly sensitive personal information every day, from medical histories and treatment plans to insurance and payment details. Protecting that information across every format is essential to building trust and helping

safeguard protected health information (PHI), financial and other private records.

As healthcare data breaches continue to impact organizations across the industry, it's important to remember that information security extends beyond digital systems. Physical hospital records, paper files, and diagnostic images can also create risks if they are not properly managed and securely destroyed when no longer needed. According to [industry reports](#), paper records continue to be involved in healthcare privacy incidents, highlighting the importance of comprehensive medical records security practices.

Which Health Documents Contain Personal Information

1. Patient Charts and Treatment Records

Patient charts contain highly sensitive patient records, including diagnoses, medications, treatment plans, and clinical notes. Protecting these records is a critical component of patient data protection and healthcare information security.

2. Prescription and Medication Documentation

Prescription records, medication orders, and dosage instructions contain confidential information that should be protected through secure storage and records management practices.

3. Registration, Billing, and Payment Records

Patient registration forms and billing records often include personally identifiable information (PII), making them valuable targets for identity theft and fraud. Secure handling and destruction of these documents can help reduce risks.

4. Insurance Documents

Insurance files typically contain a combination of personal, medical, and financial information. Strong healthcare document management procedures can help organizations safeguard this sensitive data.

5. Diagnostic Images and Medical Reports

X-rays, MRI reports, laboratory results, and other diagnostic records contain confidential health information and require appropriate safeguards throughout their lifecycle.

How Does WM Help Protect Patient Data

Protecting patient data requires a comprehensive approach that extends across the full lifecycle of sensitive materials, from how records are created and stored to how they are retained and securely destroyed. Employee training, secure storage, retention policies, and secure document destruction all play an important role in helping healthcare organizations protect patient privacy, support regulatory compliance efforts, and reduce the risk of data breaches.

With secure destruction as part of a broader information management strategy, healthcare organizations can better protect sensitive records and the people behind them. WM's [secure document destruction service, Shred-it](#), can help healthcare organizations strengthen their records management and secure shredding programs with solutions designed to protect sensitive information throughout its lifecycle. Learn more about our [secure document destruction service](#).

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