Safeguarding Electronic Health Records

There have been recent reports from top federal health officials that many hospitals and doctors have received billions of dollars in government subsidies to upgrade electronic health records (EHR), but have not done enough to make them shareable. Farzad Mostashari, national coordinator for health information technology at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, said as of 2010 only 19% of hospitals could share patient information electronically with outside physicians.He also said 73% of primary care doctors don't receive information about their patients being discharged from the hospital within 2 days.As providers make the move towards allowing for the ease of sharing, they must also make sure they are still HIPAA compliant.If you're utilizing electronic health records or using electronics to store Private Health Information (PHI) there are several things you must take into consideration to safeguard yourself.

Nelson Hardiman attorney Aaron Lachant stated, "As the movement towards electronic health records increases, so too does the need to comply with privacy and security laws. Many healthcare providers do not know about encryption requirements and other technical safeguards that HIPAA's Security Rule requires. Healthcare providers become susceptible to potential breaches when storing patient's protected health information electronically, and ensuring that their practice or facility is compliant should be a primary focus."