

# FORTRA

WHITE PAPER (Globalscape)

## How To Enhance A Data Protection Strategy: **From HIPAA To HITECH**





## How To Enhance Your Regulatory Compliance Initiatives With A Managed File Transfer (MFT) Platform

The number of data breaches within the healthcare industry is alarming to say the least. From a patient perspective, it is more than disconcerting to think personal information could end up in the wrong hands after something as simple as a check-up at the doctor's office. Trust is monumental, especially in the healthcare industry. Given the option, a patient will not hesitate to seek out other more trusted or reputable organizations for health services or care.

Part of keeping the trust of current and future patients involves having an IT infrastructure in place designed with the optimum levels of security, which includes complying with healthcare regulatory requirements.

This healthcare compliance whitepaper will walk you through the different ways a managed file transfer (MFT) platform can better prepare you for the process of complying with healthcare regulations and securing patient data.

### What's At Stake?

The high cost of lawsuits, noncompliance fines, legal settlements, business disruptions, productivity loss, and revenue loss far exceed the cost of good security hygiene,

Over  
**30 Million**  
records were breached  
during the first half of 2017  
within the healthcare  
industry.

**Gemalto.**

*"Breach Index 2017 H1 Report"*

which oftentimes falls in line with regulatory compliance requirements. And according to Ponemon's 2017 report, "The True Cost of Compliance with Data Protection Regulations," those non-compliance costs can reach an estimated \$14.82 million.

When it comes to securing data, there are no easy answers or guarantees. However, there are best practices that will help you ensure that you are doing everything possible to better protect patient data and meet compliance requirements.

## Questions To Consider

Here are a few questions to consider when determining your organization's compliance readiness:

1. Is your organization's data security policies up-to-date?  
Do you hold employee security trainings held on a regular basis?
2. Are you facing limitations with operational visibility, in terms of identifying data breach vulnerabilities or risks?
3. Do you have a current plan or procedure in place if your organization were to experience a data breach?
4. Is your organization prepared for a regulatory compliance audit?

## From HIPAA To HITECH: Compliance By Design

Managing healthcare compliance for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health Act (HITECH) is a complicated task and can't be solved with technology alone. Meeting, maintaining, and managing compliance by any design is a time-intensive and complex endeavor that involves planning, processes, technology, and above all, people. It also requires a clear and current security policy that includes regular security training and well-defined processes.

Being compliance-ready also requires a fully visible and well-governed IT infrastructure, so IT can more effectively manage and protect the data within their purview. The process of compliance can be complex, but it is often less so with the right strategy and tools at hand.

While the prevention of data breaches continues to be a priority for any IT professional managing the network and data of a healthcare organization, ensuring operational efficiency and productivity is equally important. Recent research from IDC Health Insights shows the healthcare industry adding "virtual care" as an additional medium to support patients, which will increase the use of electronic

Non-compliance costs

**2.71 times**  
the cost of maintaining  
or meeting compliance  
requirements.

**Ponemon Institute,**

*"The True Cost of Compliance with Data  
Protection Regulations"*

health records (EHRs) and digital patient data. This also increases the importance of ensuring that sensitive patient data is always protected and readily available.

From identity theft to healthcare fraud, EHRs have a great deal of sensitive patient information targeted by hackers. According to IDC Health Insights, the increase in cyberattacks is a result of the increased use of electronic data used within the healthcare industry (Cyberattacks will Compromise 1-in-3 Healthcare Records Next Year). In conjunction with other security measures like data protection and antimalware software, MFT offers a secure and reliable solution to support the secure management of patient data in its various states, while it is at rest and while it is transit.

**Cyberattacks Will Compromise  
1-In-3 Healthcare Records  
Next Year**



## How A Managed File Transfer (MFT) Platform Can Help Healthcare Organizations

In its simplest definition, managed file transfer (MFT) software is a mechanism to manage the secure, visible, and efficient exchange of data. With this mechanism of file transfer management, an organization can better meet their evolving and complex business needs.

Data movement is a constant within all organizations, however healthcare organizations face greater scrutiny when it comes to their process of secure and efficient movement. Data privacy measures will receive close attention following any data breach in the case of both HIPAA and HITECH. The onus is often on the healthcare organization, and they will have to demonstrate how they exercised reasonable diligence in accordance with regulatory data security standards.

With the robust analytics and reporting capabilities of an MFT platform, you can audit your infrastructure for risk mitigation to help you identify security vulnerabilities or to help establish data privacy initiatives.

The healthcare sector is not immune to the challenges that accompany various sizes and types of data or the many other varying degrees of workflow complexities. For the more complex file transfer workflows, you can save a great deal of time by automating your workflows with

the MFT platform. File transfer workflows can involve any variety of events, triggers, and controls, which can make the manual processing of these workflows time-consuming and vulnerable to error.

If you want to design a data security and compliance strategy with greater efficacy across all stages, an MFT platform is crucial at every stage, this includes planning, implementation, maintenance, risk mitigation, and data breach protocol (from an organization data breach response plan to notification requirements).

**Here is a closer look at how the MFT platform helps healthcare organizations meet their business needs with the file transfer efficiency and security of an MFT platform:**

### 1. Maintain Operational Visibility

In the case of disparate or legacy systems, visibility is limited, often having various data silos, which is far from conducive when you need to meet data security regulatory standards. To further complicate matters, data management with a disparate system is far less efficient when data access and visibility involves various logins and platforms. Streamlining your reporting efforts will only increase in difficulty, as will mitigating security risks.

Can you pass a driving test while wearing a blind fold? Probably not. Can you comply with data privacy regulations

while wearing the metaphorical blindfold of a disparate system? The answer is the same, probably not. A disparate system has many blind spots, or data silos, and dangerous visibility limitations. An MFT platform can help reduce your blind spots, so you have the visibility, control, and insight over your IT infrastructure. For example, an MFT platform can help identify failed data transfers or multiple login attempts, and at the same time you can have automated alerts set up to enable a faster response time and mitigate any further security risks.

## 2. Automate To Save Time And Reduce Errors

A healthcare organization cannot afford to deal with the slow and inefficient data transfer processes that are often common in legacy file transfer solutions. Less effective legacy solutions tend to have manual, complex, and tedious file transfer tasks. Through an MFT solution and its advanced automation functionalities, an organization can gain the immediate and long-term benefits with reliable and error-free file transfers.

While the manual process of a few files may not be of any concern, as the volume of data transfers increases and the file sizes grow, then time and accuracy are surely at risk. Finding a solution that can easily streamline these tasks through automation can provide an immediate time saving and help to minimize errors. Additionally, manual file transfer tasks are often vulnerable to workforce limitations and employee turnover.

Automating file transfers also helps organizations meet compliance and security mandates through automatic policy enforcement. Consider the time spent manually trying to find expired data or purging old sensitive data and records that could expose vulnerabilities in your system or cause noncompliance. Through MFT, these tasks are accomplished in accordance with security policies through automated processes in far less time.

## 3. Integration

Healthcare organizations, regardless of size or specialty, rely on a variety of disparate systems. For example, suppose your HR department runs a payroll system that needs to communicate and exchange data with the finance system

used by your accounting department. However, the payroll system uses a different data type than the finance system. With this common type of use case, a healthcare organization's IT department is at a disadvantage.

Disparate systems of file transfer are difficult to manage, and can interfere with an IT department's data security and compliance initiatives. Risk mitigation requires a comprehensive level of visibility and control, especially when data privacy regulations are a priority. Managing data activity from various applications is time consuming, and not sustainable for organizations with a diverse set of file transfer needs.

Integration enables the crucial IT need for operational visibility and control, which is quickly obscured in disparate environments. Integrating disparate systems with a MFT solution simplifies data management in various ways, starting with a centralized dashboard to manage data activity within the environment. An IT department within the healthcare sector can have a greater degree of insight into security and productivity vulnerabilities with MFT's easy-access centralized dashboard.

## 4. Enhanced Security And Compliance

An MFT solution offers a distinct advantage because an IT professional can gain access to a number of functionalities that help support security and compliance efforts. For example, MFT solutions that offer real-time activity monitoring and tracking can make it easier for an administrator to catch security vulnerabilities before they become a problem.

While real-time activity monitoring and tracking can improve productivity and efficiency, it also improves an organization's security. Robust logging functionality also helps administrators provide documentation to auditors. Without visibility over data movement or access, an administrator would not be able to identify or prevent unauthorized access of patient data.

The data volume and flow within a healthcare organization is continuous. When files are not being moved within the organization, then they are being moved outside the organization. For example, a hospital's billing department



may need to transfer patient data or EHRs to an insurance company or health plan provider. An MFT solution provides a centralized platform so that an organization can seamlessly manage the secure and efficient exchange of data, while supporting compliance requirements like HIPAA and HITECH.

With an MFT solution, the risks involved when transferring secure files are significantly reduced because you maintain full control and visibility of the movement of your data.

## Summary

Patients place a great deal of trust in their healthcare providers and expect them to take responsibility for ensuring that patients are receiving the best care for their personal health and wellbeing. At the same time, patients expect that their private and sensitive financial data is kept secure for their financial health and wellbeing.

MFT solutions represent a critical opportunity for healthcare providers to integrate IT security with EHR, which makes medical information more easily—and securely—accessible and shareable between physicians. The right MFT solution

will help an IT professional ensure that the healthcare organization accomplishes all of its efficiency, productivity, compliance, and security goals. Accomplishing these goals is especially important for IT professionals in the healthcare industry where greater efficiency and security can provide immediate benefits for the staff and patients every day.

By choosing the right MFT solution for your healthcare organization, you will immediately gain the following benefits:



Maintain operational visibility



Automate to save time and reduce errors



Third-party application integration



Enhanced security and compliance

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