

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center  
HIPAA Policy

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Policy:	1.2	Latest Revision: 02/26/03
	De-identification of Information	Page: 1 of 4

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I. Purpose, Reference, and Responsibility

A. Purpose

This policy states that health information that does not identify an individual is not individually identifiable health information (IIHI). If information is de-identified, there should be no reasonable basis to believe that the information could be used to identify an individual. Such de-identified information is not subject to the HIPAA Privacy Rules.

This policy also defines the requirements for de-identification of health information and the situations in which a covered entity may determine that health information is not IIHI.

B. Reference

45 C.F.R. § 164.514(a) - (c).

C. Responsibility

It is the responsibility of all individuals at the UCHSC who collect, use, manage or disclose PHI, to comply with UCHSC policies and procedures on PHI or covering de-identification of PHI in order to ensure there shall be no reasonable basis to believe that any de-identified health information can be used to identify an individual.

Any information that has been de-identified does not have to comply with HIPAA when being used or disclosed.

II. Applicability and Definitions

A. Applicability

This policy is applicable to anyone at the UCHSC who manages or maintains PHI and may be asked to disclose PHI.

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center  
HIPAA Policy

---

Policy:	1.2	Latest Revision: 02/26/03
	De-identification of Information	Page: 2 of 4

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B. Definitions

Covered Entity (CE)  
Device Identifier  
Individually Identifiable Health Information (IIHI)  
Protected Health Information (PHI)

III. Policy

A. General

PHI will either be de-identified to protect the identity of an individual or the applicable HIPAA requirements will be followed when using or disclosing PHI.

De-identified information is information that does not identify an individual and for which there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information could be used to identify an individual. De-identified information is no longer considered IIHI or PHI.

B. Requirements for De-identification of PHI

The UCHSC may determine that health information is not IIHI and that the requirements for de-identification of PHI have been followed if:

1. A person with appropriate knowledge of and experience with statistical and scientific principles and methods de-identifies the PHI by:
  - (i) Identifying and applying appropriate principals and methods, such a person determines that the risk is very small that the information could be used, alone or in combination with other available information, by an anticipated recipient, to identify an individual who is a subject of the information; and
  - (ii) Documenting the methods and results of the analysis that justify such determination; **or**

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center  
HIPAA Policy

---

Policy:	1.2	Latest Revision: 02/26/03
	De-identification of Information	Page: 3 of 4

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2. (i) If the following identifiers of the individual or of relatives, employers, or household members of the individual, are removed:
- (a) Names;
  - (b) Geographic subdivisions smaller than a State, including street address, city, county, precinct, zip code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of a zip code if, according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census (See Attachment A):
    - (1) The geographic unit formed by combining all zip codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and
    - (2) The initial three digits of a zip code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to "000".
  - (c) All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death; all ages over 89 and all elements of dates (including year) indicative of such age (such ages may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older);
  - (d) Telephone numbers;
  - (e) Fax numbers;
  - (f) Electronic mail addresses;
  - (g) Social security numbers;
  - (h) Medical record numbers;
  - (i) Health plan beneficiary numbers;
  - (j) Account numbers;
  - (k) Certificate/license numbers;
  - (l) Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers;
  - (m) Device identifiers and serial numbers;
  - (n) Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);
  - (o) Internet Protocol (IP) address numbers;
  - (p) Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints;

University of Colorado Health Sciences Center  
HIPAA Policy

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Policy:	1.2	Latest Revision: 02/26/03
	De-identification of Information	Page: 4 of 4

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- (q) Full face photographic images and any comparable images; and
- (r) Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code; except as permitted by paragraph C (below) of this section; and

- (ii) The UCHSC does not have actual knowledge that the information could be used alone or in combination with other information to identify an individual who is a subject of the information.

C. Re-identification

Codes or other means of identification may be assigned to the data record to allow information de-identified under this section to be re-identified by the UCHSC, provided that:

1. Derivation. The code or other means of record identification is not derived from or related to information about the individual and cannot be translated so as to identify the individual; and
2. Security. The UCHSC does not use or disclose the code or means of record identification for any other purpose, and does not disclose the mechanism for re-identification.

ATTACHMENT A: How to locate population data from the US Census by zip code:

1. Basic Census 2000 data may be found at <http://factfinder.census.gov> (or [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov); select “American FactFinder” in the left column)
2. In the right hand column, under the “Data Sets” heading, select one of the following:
  - a. “2000 Summary File 1” or
  - b. “2000 Summary File 3”
3. On the Data Sets page, right side, select “Quick Tables”
4. On the Select Geography page:
  - From “Select a geographic type,” select “5-digit ZIP Code Tabulation Area”
  - From “Select a 3-digit ZIP code tabulation area,” select the first 3 digits of the zip code
  - From “Select one or more geographic areas,” select one or more 5-digit ZIP codes and click “Add”
  - Click on “Next” (if you don’t see the “Next” button, scroll right until you do)
5. On the Select Tables page:
  - If you are using Summary File 1, select the “DP-1 profiles” you desire, and click “Add”
  - If you are using Summary File 3, select one or more of the categories and click “Add”
6. Click “Show Table”