

# SelectShred News

OCTOBER 2013



## WHY SMALL MEDICAL FACILITIES SHOULD EVALUATE THEIR DOCUMENT DESTRUCTION PROGRAM AND SHREDDING POLICIES

Unfortunately, many small medical offices, including dentists' offices, believe they are too small to use a shredding service and that the office shredder will suffice. Due to the awareness of identity theft, concerned citizens are reporting directly to law enforcement whenever they see medical records in the trash. On the other hand, the criminal-minded sees the opportunity that can come from having access to names, addresses, birthdates, diagnoses, and social security numbers.

A Federal Trade Commission (FTC) report on medical identity theft stated that a thief may use patient names or health insurance numbers to see a doctor, get prescription drugs, file claims with insurance providers, or get other care. The FTC also said that if the thief's health information is mixed with a patient's information, the patient's treatment, insurance and payment records, and credit report may be affected.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services requires that medical staff be trained in confidential handling and destruction of patient information. All major healthcare centers, hospitals, outpatient facilities, insurance groups, and pharmacies must show compliance with HIPAA federal regulations.

A third party shredding service provides legal protection and proof of HIPAA compliance. Facilities with properly trained staff, a document destruction program in place, and a recurring shredding service are in the best position to combat medical identity theft, stop medical data breach, prevent HIPAA violations, and protect themselves from crippling penalties.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) can impose penalties of \$100 per violation and up to an annual maximum of \$1.5 million. Criminal penalties can be up to \$50,000 and one year in prison for obtaining or disclosing protected health information (PHI).

**DID YOU KNOW?** *The 2013 Survey on Medical Identity Theft conducted by Ponemon Institute estimated that medical identity theft affects 1.84 million people in the U.S. and that healthcare organizations are just starting to recognize that medical identity theft is not just a patient problem but it is also a problem for healthcare organizations. <http://healthitsecurity.com/2013/09/17/how-can-healthcare-providers-prevent-medical-identity-fraud/>*

Commercial

Call **772-463-3166** OR email **INFO@SELECTSHRED.COM**  
SelectShred, Inc. ■ 7960 SW Jack James Drive ■ Stuart, FL 34997

Residential