The Effectiveness of HIPAA Policy

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The 1990s was a significant decade of the push to digitalization. The Dotcom bubble in full swing and computers becoming part of every home, it was the wild west but on the internet. In 1996, HIPAA was a major policy that was passed which laid down the foundation to today's digital security, and privacy rights. This policy was to reshape and organize the healthcare industry as data was now going digital. HIPAA tackled major interest points that public was worried about such as privacy, data leaks, discrimination, and who would control information. HIPAA set national standards through multiple rules including the Privacy and Security Rules. To assess the effectiveness of this policy we will look at what scholars say and how even in my workplace I am tied to HIPAA. This affects multiple disciplines such as ethics, politics, social trust, and society.

Experts across the board have agreed HIPAA set the national standard for privacy and security. Appari and Johnson (2010) found that HIPPA forced health institutions to adopt proper protections for data and take cybersecurity seriously. McDonald and Forte (2020) explains that HIPAA reshaped digital privacy across healthcare that did not exist before. Even outside of the healthcare world HIPAA has affected how people view privacy and the rights behind it. This cases make it clear HIPAA continues to shape and grow security and privacy rights across the country. It forced all companies and institutions to meet a national standard, so the quality of data is consistent throughout.

Another argument on how HIPAA has a positive overall effect is effectiveness. Referencing Diaz et al (2021) from my previous analysis paper its stated HIPAA improved patient trust by building trust between patient and institution. This allows more confidence in the patient to share more information. Bowen and Klecun (2019) explains that patients are willing to engage with digital tools when they believe that their privacy is protected and consistent. The

covid pandemic is a good example of this, as communication through telehealth platforms has become immensely popular. People were able to communicate to doctors, get prescribed, and even consulate through virtual matters, this making these systems more effective.

In the workplace HIPAA has made the workflows more effective and efficient. I work for a commercial printer and marketing firm. Our biggest client is Anthem Health. This means the effects of HIPAA is every aspect of my job. The way I process work must be with proper encrypted patient health information (PHI). The data I receive from Anthem requires me to double check my work and be more cautious. Even our background systems like the automated audits and IT have to ensure we stay in compliance with HIPAA standards. This streamlines the workflow but the background foundation of the two rules, Security and Privacy.

There are always two sides an accessing an argument. Moore and Frye (2019) argue that HIPAA Regulations may improve workflows but is also slowed important communication which can be an issue when the information is time sensitive or in the event of an emergency. Ancker et al. (2017) study found that systems that have to be HIPAA compliant may give the workers alert fatigue as the depending on the job title some people have to remain extra alert that way they can ensure the system, and they are following compliances. These two studies both show HIPAA is still effective, but the true effectiveness may vary depending on job and job title.

Based on these findings I can argue that ethically HIPAA protects peoples autonomy, confidentiality, and fairness. Politically it corrected and set a federal standard oversight for health data while forcing all institutions to comply to these measures. Socially it shaped patient expectations and opened the lines for safe communication between patients and institution. Remember those who feel more confident and trust the system will respond with more personal data which can be used for treatment or health purposes. Another argument I would like to add is

that with this federal compliance standards, this improved health institutions in rural areas. Companies were properly funded and in term quality of life and healthcare increased.

I believe the way to measure the effectiveness of this policy is to look at records from 1996 to today (2025). Check if the quality of life and care has increased or decreased. Review patient satisfaction reports and audit institutions to see if they are truly in compliance standards. This isn't much different to what people work as a GRC analysis do already for their jobs. Ironically that is my career path I want to follow in.

Based on the research given I believe HIPAA is a foundational significant policy that continues to help our everyday aspect of our lives. As artificial intelligence becomes more mainstream, we will see rules of HIPAA challenged again as AI requires substantial amounts of data. It is important to mention that his policy laid down the mainframe and as time goes on more policy updates get added to better adjust to the modern world. HIPAA works and it is important that we understand its effectiveness and how it will continue shape and drive technology.

Sources:

Please note that I did use some sources from Policy Analysis #4 as there is some overlap between societal impacts, ethics, and policy.

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