

What is a ‘covered entity’ and how does it affect my research?

Per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rules, a ‘covered entity’ is a term used to collectively identify health plans, health care clearinghouses, and health care providers that transmit electronic health information in connection to a transaction (e.g., billing, payments). At the University of Rochester (UR), this includes (but is not limited to): Strong Memorial Hospital; Highland Hospital; FF Thompson Hospital; Eastman Dental Center; UR Faculty and Dental Groups; UR School of Medicine and Dentistry; UR School of Nursing and Community Nursing Center; University Health Service and Mt. Hope Family Center (for a complete list, click [here](#)).

Researchers are considered a covered entity when they are health care providers that transmit electronic health information as described above and, in turn, they must comply with HIPAA in using and/or disclosing health information for research purposes. When all study team members are within a covered entity, complying with HIPAA is clearly required. These requirements become less clear however, when a study team includes members of the covered entity (e.g., URM) and members who are not part of the covered entity (e.g., River Campus faculty or staff). **Anytime a study team includes at least one member of the covered entity, the entire study team must comply with HIPAA.** Generally, this means that specific conditions must be met in order to use or disclose subject health information (e.g., a HIPAA authorization needs to be included in subject consent forms) and appropriate security measures need to be in place to protect subject information once collected (e.g., data can only be stored on appropriately encrypted devices).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [OHSP Policy 702 HIPAA Privacy Rule](#)
 - OHSP Explains...
 - [Navigating HIPAA Compliance in Human Subject Research: The Privacy Rule](#)
 - [Navigating HIPAA Compliance in Human Subject Research: The Security Rule](#)
 - [University of Rochester HIPAA Intranet Site](#)
 - [National Institutes of Health’s Protecting Personal Health Information in Research Website](#)
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