



CYBERSECURITY: REAL-LIFE SCENARIOS

The U.S. government's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) recommends that health plans strengthen business defenses (i.e. safeguards) against the following three threats to cybersecurity¹.



THREAT 1: PHISHING

Phishing is used to trick individuals into divulging sensitive information, such as ePHI, by impersonating a trustworthy source².



SOLUTION ✓

Train your workforce regarding security awareness in software and e-mail usage. Your HIPAA Security Officer and IT team are responsible for regular testing of software systems and evaluating their effectiveness.

- Train staff on what to look for in suspicious emails
- “Test” the system with simulated phishing emails to workforce members and assess their response

¹ [Q1 2022 Newsletter](#)

² According to the OCR Newsletter, 42% of ransomware attacks in Q2 2021 involved phishing.



THREAT 2:

EXPLOITING KNOWN VULNERABILITIES

Hackers can penetrate networks and gain access to ePHI by exploiting known vulnerabilities.

Vulnerabilities may exist in many parts of your IT infrastructure, including:

- server, desktop, and mobile device operating systems
- application database, and web software
- router, firewall, and other
- device firmware



SOLUTION

Uncover and address vulnerabilities by:

- Conducting a thorough Risk Analysis (RA)
- Documenting and maintaining RA results

Mitigate known vulnerabilities by:

- Applying vendor patches or upgrading to a newer software version.
- Upgrading or replacing obsolete, unsupported applications and devices (i.e., legacy systems).
- Implementing a security management process to prevent, detect, contain, and correct security violations, including conducting a risk analysis!



THREAT 3:

WEAK CYBERSECURITY PRACTICES

Strong practices include complex password rules and dual factor authentication.

80% of breaches are due to hacking involving compromised credentials¹.



SOLUTION

- Verify that persons or entities seeking access to ePHI are who they claim to be by implementing authentication processes.
- Implement results from the risk analysis to better protect ePHI (e.g., which authentication solutions did you discover are best for your business?).



¹ [Q1 2022 Newsletter](#)



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