

## Unencrypted Laptop Costs Healthcare Entity \$250,000

A \$250,000 fine has been paid to HHS for the breach of 148 patients' data when a laptop was stolen from the vehicle of a QCA Health Plan of Arkansas employee. The laptop was not encrypted.

Chances are **your** laptop or tablet goes where you go, carrying healthcare data and PHI from office to vehicle to home and back again. Throw in a side trip to the grocery store or the bank, and you've got a theft in the making. It can happen to anyone, anywhere. And when it does, you are required to **report it** to the HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

### What the OCR Investigation Discovered

- QCA failed to implement security policies and procedures, including conducting a thorough assessment of potential risks to the ePHI it held and implementing security measures to reduce vulnerabilities to a level sufficient to comply with 45 CFR §164.306,
- QCA failed to implement physical safeguards for all workstations that access ePHI to restrict access to authorized users, and
- QCA impermissibly disclosed the ePHI of 148 individuals.

In addition to the \$250,000 fine, QCA Health Plan is now required to implement a detailed Security Management process and Security Awareness and Training program, among other stipulations, under the direct scrutiny of the OCR.

### Here's What We Recommend

If you want to avoid a similar experience, we can help. Our **PHI Protection** solution ensures encryption of your portable devices without the inconvenience that often accompanies it.

We can also conduct your **Security Risk Assessment**, which most healthcare providers don't have time to do themselves. Our thorough, HIPAA-compliant SRA generally takes less than four hours, is minimally disruptive, and is refreshingly affordable.

We also provide other HIPAA-compliant services. For information [click here](#).

"Covered entities and business associates must understand that mobile device security is their obligation.

Our message (with this large fine) is simple: Encryption is your best defense against these incidents."

*Susan McAndrew, OCR deputy director of health information privacy*

**As the #1 provider of HIPAA-compliant IT services in Florida, we're dedicated to helping the Florida healthcare community achieve compliance, protect PHI, and avoid fines.**