

## HIPAA Fact Sheet

### **What is HIPAA?**

HIPAA stands for Health Insurance Portability Act. HIPAA is a federal law that sets a national standard to protect medical records and other personal health information.

### **When did HIPAA become a law?**

Congress passed this legislation in 1996. All medical facilities were required be in compliance with HIPAA patient information regulations by April 2003.

### **Is HIPAA applicable to all health care providers?**

Yes, HIPAA applies to all hospitals, physicians, insurance companies, laboratories, dentists, ambulatory surgery centers, business offices, and vendors (like KTTS).

### **What is considered "health information"?**

Any information, whether oral, written, or electronic (computer) pertaining to the patient. Information can be related to past, present, or future physical or mental health conditions.

### **What is Protected Health Information (PHI)?**

The following is considered protected patient information: addresses, dates, telephone/fax numbers, social security numbers, medical record numbers, patient account numbers, insurance plan numbers, vehicle information, license numbers, medical equipment numbers, photographs, fingerprints, e-mail addresses and internet address information.

### **What is TPO?**

TPO stands for: Treatment, Payment, Operations. HIPAA allows us to share patient information for the purpose of TREATMENT (providing care to patients), PAYMENT (getting paid for caring for patients), and OPERATIONS (normal business activities). However, if the use of the information does not fall under one of these categories, the hospital must have the patient's signed consent before sharing the information with anyone.

### **Does this impact patient information interpreters have access to?**

Yes. As an independent contractor with KTTS, Inc., interpreters are required to abide by all HIPAA rules and regulations.

## HIPAA Obligation – Serious Business for Interpreters

Each contract interpreter who works with KTTS is required to sign a HIPAA compliance document. This document will be kept in your permanent personnel file at the KTTS offices. More important than the signed acknowledgement that you'll follow HIPAA guidelines in your role as an interpreter, is your OBLIGATION to the patients. YOU are ultimately responsible to protect patient privacy and personal information.

Do NOT leave worksheets in your car – or visible on your passenger seat where anybody walking by could look through the window and read the information. Keep your worksheets with you at all times, and NEVER bring more worksheets than what you'll need for that appointment or day. Shred your unused worksheets using a professional shredder, or bring them to the KTTS office for proper shredding and disposal. **Understand it is your obligation to always protect confidential patient information.**

**What are some "special tips" interpreters should know?**

- Protecting the confidential health information of patients is the responsibility of everyone involved in their treatment and healing process, including interpreters.
- Be aware of and sensitive to information about a patient that is considered confidential. If it is information you wouldn't want shared about you, do not share it with others.
- Think before you talk about patient-specific information.
- If you would happen to overhear or see information that is considered confidential and pertains to a patient, keep that information to yourself.
- Do not talk about patients in the elevators, hallways, cafeteria, gift shop, or other common areas.
- Do not carry worksheets with you, except what you will need for that appointment or day.
- Do not leave KTTS worksheets in your car, and never in any location where they would be visible to someone who has no need to KNOW the information.
- When discarding worksheets, either bring them to KTTS for proper shredding and recycling, **\*OR\* shred or tear them yourself at your home.** Never place a whole (or intact worksheet) in your trash or recycle container at home.

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**HIPAA ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR  
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT KTTS, Inc.**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, an Independent Contractor of Kim Tong Translation Service, Inc. acknowledge the confidentiality of patient health care information (“Confidential Patient Information”) that I may receive or have access to in the course of providing interpreting services at participating Healthcare Facilities at which I am assigned. Patient and personnel information from any source and in any form, including oral communication, audio recording, and electronic display, is strictly confidential. It is the policy of KTTS, Inc. and healthcare facilities that all users respect and preserve this right to privacy and confidentiality.

I shall maintain the confidentiality of Confidential Patient Information, and in doing so shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including without limitation, the privacy provisions under Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”) and the policies and procedures of each participating Healthcare Facility where I am assigned. My agreement to maintain the confidentiality of Confidential Patient Information shall survive the termination of my contract with KTTS, Inc. and the conclusion of any assignment at the participating Healthcare Facility.

Name (Print):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_