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Outsourcing release of information processes can be of great benefit to a hospital, medical office or other healthcare facilities who seek to add greater efficiency, quality, and service while reducing liability associated with this critical component of medical document management. However, in the rush to realize the array of benefits outsourcing release of information provides, mistakes can be made that could be just as costly â€“ or worse - with respect to HIPAA compliance.

What to Avoid When Outsourcing Release of Information

Here are some of the common mistakes organizations make when partnering with an outsource provider for release of information services:

*Being too vague about strategy and objectives: Hiring an outsource company based on very vague strategy and objectives can lead to service misalignment and generally non-capitalization of all available benefits associated with hiring external help. Itâ€™s imperative to understand the full potential of using such a service and to develop specific, quantifiable objectives related to what the organization wants to achieve. This should go beyond cost-cutting measures alone; there should be specific risk mitigation, performance improvements and strategies related to improving the organizationâ€™s financial goals as well as its overall reputation in the industry.

*Not doing enough research before selecting an outsource partner: Itâ€™s important to go beyond what an outsource company provides in their marketing material during the sales cycle. An organization must dig deeper and do research with the Better Business Bureau and other agencies fundamental to vetting a company. Also, ask for client referrals and speak with other companies for their opinions on what it was like working with the outsource firm. Ask unexpected questions like â€œwhat would you have done differently if you could?â€• for an instinctive, non-prepped response.

*Selecting an outsourcing release of information company that does not specialize in medical records: Because a company manages digital medical records does not mean that is their specialty; instead, they may cater to a wide number of industries and think that their singular, cookie-cutter process will work effectively for every application. When it comes to release of information outsourcing, it is best to select a provider who focuses on the healthcare industry as such specialists will be properly trained on the nuances of the industry, HIPAA compliance best practices and will generally be more attuned to industry protocols.

*Under-utilizing the outsource provider: Many companies may choose not to outsource certain process that they know and do well, assuming itâ€™s prudent to continue managing these functions in-house. Very often these are administrative tasks that they should be offloaded to an outsource provider so that thereâ€™s service synergy and continuity, but also so they have more time to focus on aspects of the core business to include growth opportunities. By continuing to manage particular tasks, healthcare organizations are not taking advantage of the full breadth of service available to them, resulting in lost opportunity. When you hired the right outsourcing release of information provider, you can develop the trust in them to do the entire job to your expectations.

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