



cornerstone

Data Backups

Backups of your practice's digital data are a vital component of your IT infrastructure, but it can be a challenge to make sure everything is protected from loss and still meets all HIPAA standards.

The first step is to identify where all your important data is. While everyone points to their server first, and that is probably the biggest piece of it, consider where other documents and images are being stored. Are team members saving spreadsheets and reports to the desktop on their individual workstations? Are images from digital cameras or CT scanners being saved to separate acquisition machines?

The two main classes of backup are local and cloud. A local backup copies the data to a separate, usually removable, storage location. This has the advantages of being cheaper (large amounts of local storage are much cheaper than equivalent amounts of cloud space) and faster than cloud (both in backing up and restoring). The weakness of this method lies in the potential for a physical disaster (fire, flood, theft) causing destruction of both the network and the backups. Rotating multiple copies of the backup media gives disaster resiliency, but at the cost of increased staff time and trouble. Taking patient data offsite brings in additional HIPAA concerns, requiring all backups to be encrypted in case of loss or theft of the backups while they're out of the office.

A cloud backup copies the selected data to an offsite storage facility, providing a backup secure from any disaster befalling your office and usually greatly reducing your staff time requirement. The main drawbacks to the cloud backup are the cost of online storage space (still much higher than an equivalent amount of local storage space) and the potential bottleneck of your internet speed. Practices in rural areas (and even the occasional urban dead spot) struggle to make sure that the day's new data (x-rays, correspondence, etc.) are backed up overnight before adding more the next.

Cornerstone is happy to check your backup at any time and give you pricing for local and cloud backup options. Please contact our office for more information or to schedule a free assessment from one of our technicians.