

Health Information Compliance Alert

Reader Questions: YOU CAN USE WEB CAMERAS

Question: Our tech team wants to use voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) and Web cameras in our telemedicine program. They are also interested in these technologies for some business and administrative use. Would VoIP or Web cameras jeopardize our security rule compliance?

North Carolina subscriber

Answer: "No," claims **Rick Ensenbach**, senior security consultant with Shavlik Technologies in Roseville, MN.

The security rule doesn't mandate that you use -- or don't use any technology. But if you do implement a new policy or procedure, like VoIP or Web cameras, you must make sure you can continue to protect your patients' PHI.

The bottom line: You can use VoIP or Web cameras, but first you'll need to conduct a risk assessment to determine if you can accept and prepare for the risks posed by those technologies.