3 Considerations for Selecting a HIPAA-Compliant Cloud Services Partner

For healthcare organizations that want to move into the cloud, it’s not uncommon to have concerns about how to do so while adhering to strict compliance standards.

IT leaders from organizations of all shapes and sizes—ranging from large SaaS providers and hospital networks to small, privately-run hospitals and healthcare solutions providers—agree that three things are clear:

• Cloud services can improve healthcare organizations’ operational efficiency, and it is a competitive necessity.
• Compliance requirements are driving a measured approach to cloud adoption.
• Many IT leaders currently running legacy infrastructure are unsure about the best way to migrate to the cloud.

The good news is that it’s possible to “have your cake and eat it, too.” It’s just a matter of selecting the right cloud services partner. As you search, keep these three considerations in mind so you can find the provider who will best meet your needs.

1. Does the provider offer vast expertise?

Designing a fully compliant cloud solution that effectively mitigates migration risks can be complicated. Compounding the challenge, many healthcare organizations don’t have the internal resources or expertise to design, deploy, and manage a HIPAA-compliant solution.

A CLOUD SERVICES PROVIDER WITH DEEP EXPERTISE IN HIPAA COMPLIANCE WILL:

• Guide you through the entire set of applicable HIPAA requirements, providing direction on which requirements are the responsibility of the provider and which are the responsibility of the covered entity.
• Sign a direct business associate agreement (BAA) that mitigates risk for the covered entity. A BAA is also a HIPAA requirement when receiving, transmitting or maintaining electronic protected health information (ePHI) via a cloud services provider.
• Deliver the infrastructure and documented processes necessary to design and operate a solution that meets strict HIPAA requirements.
• Go the extra mile to obtain a HITRUST CFS certification. This third-party verification of HIPAA compliance incorporates a risk-based approach that includes state and federal regulations to ensure the proper protection requirements are met when storing or accessing sensitive data in the cloud.

2. Does the provider have a solid managed services portfolio?

Many IT leaders are apprehensive about carrying out a complex migration from legacy infrastructure to the cloud.

Fortunately, the right cloud services provider will offer cloud migration services designed to walk you through the entire process—from initial planning and application audits, all the way to completing the actual migration. This service is especially helpful for organizations with limited in-house IT resources and compliance expertise, and it’s often a great way to drive down costs. Rather than recruiting, training, and payrolling these resources internally, you can outsource their responsibilities to a team that already has the expertise you need to manage your cloud infrastructure and keep it compliant.
Once your solution is up and running, it’s important to be able to identify and resolve issues quickly. Partnering with a managed service provider will give you 24/7 access to a team of support specialists who can quickly fix any issues that occur. Proactive monitoring services provide additional peace of mind by identifying and remediating issues before they escalate.

Note that while hyperscale public cloud providers (Amazon, Google, and Microsoft) offer numerous features and near-infinite scalability, they all rely on service providers like Hostway|HOSTING to provide managed support.

3. Is the provider familiar with a variety of infrastructure options?

When designing a HIPAA-compliant solution, it’s important to consider the requirements of the individual applications, as well as those put forth by HIPAA.

For example, applications that must support highly variable, spikey loads are often best suited for a public cloud platform. Public clouds also tend to work well for extremely automated, infrastructure-aware applications and DevOps processes.

On the other hand, high IOPS databases and applications requiring the highest levels of security are typically best suited for a dedicated server or private cloud (single-tenant resources). Applications that support predictable loads or require a very specific configuration are also great candidates for a dedicated environment.

In order to meet HIPAA requirements, the solution will also likely include a number of security and compliance features, such as web application firewalls (WAF), log management, DDoS prevention, and more.

The good news is that it’s possible to build a HIPAA-compliant solution using either public or private/dedicated resources—and you can do it without slowing your organization to a halt. Working with an experienced managed services provider, such as Hostway|HOSTING, with a broad portfolio of cloud-based resources, will allow you to build the best solution for your unique requirements.

Ready to Choose?

Hostway|HOSTING is proactive about HIPAA compliance, providing secure, HITRUST-certified options specifically designed to support the needs of healthcare providers and healthcare software companies. Rather than deferring to a public cloud partner to sign the BAA, all of our solutions are backed by a Hostway|HOSTING-signed BAA to provide our customers with better peace of mind.
About Hostway|HOSTING
Hostway|HOSTING is leading the industry in secure, digital transformation solutions, featuring full-stack services across the entire lifecycle to help IT leaders harness data. As the world’s most trusted managed cloud services provider, Hostway|HOSTING delivers experienced and secure migration services, complex managed cloud infrastructure, and application solutions for mission-critical software. Our team of engineers in North America, Europe, and Asia deliver reliable and scalable managed cloud and hybrid cloud solutions to thousands of customers across fourteen geographically diverse data centers around the world—all while ensuring strict compliance to PCI, HITRUST, HIPAA, FERPA, and GDPR guidelines. The Hostway|HOSTING mission is simple—to provide the best customer experience from the industry’s best team. Visit [www.hostway.com](http://www.hostway.com) or [www.HOSTING.com](http://www.HOSTING.com) for more information.

Does your infrastructure hold up to compliance best practices?
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