

When They Say “HIPAA” and Shut You Out

Medical records, phone calls, and care-plan conversations.

What is happening: You manage care at home, but an office or hospital says it cannot talk to you.

Where you stand

- Your loved one can authorize you in writing. Ask each office for its release form.
- If your loved one can decide and speak, they can say they want you included in the conversation.
- HIPAA allows sharing relevant information with someone involved in care when the patient does not object.
- Patients can request their own records and direct that a copy go to you.

Words you can use

1. “What form do you need so you can speak with me?”
2. “My loved one is here and wants me included. Please note that in the chart.”
3. “Here is the healthcare power of attorney. Please add it to the record.”

Free help to call

- Privacy officer or patient advocate — ask the front desk who handles records and privacy.
- Area Agency on Aging — Eldercare Locator, 1-800-677-1116.
- Elder law attorney or legal aid for power-of-attorney questions.

Write down: Which offices have releases, where the power of attorney is kept, who refused access, and the reason given.

Notes from this conversation