



## SOLUTION BRIEF

# Leveraging NIST's Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) and SPHEREboard to Achieve HIPAA Compliance

Explore how SPHEREboard's capabilities combined with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Cybersecurity Framework can help your organization achieve HIPAA compliance, ensuring robust Identity Hygiene and reduced risk.

## SHAPING CYBERSECURITY FOR HEALTHCARE

### NIST's Role in HIPAA Compliance

As organizations in the healthcare sector navigate the ever-evolving landscape of cybersecurity threats, adhering to established frameworks becomes paramount for protecting electronic Patient Health Information (ePHI).

Federal law mandates organizations to adhere to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to guarantee the security of sensitive patient health data, preventing its unauthorized disclosure. HIPAA establishes safeguards to ensure that this delicate information is utilized only for its intended purpose and remains undisclosed for any other reason.

In July 2022, NIST released a special publication, presenting a structured approach to cybersecurity risk management with a focus on healthcare and HIPAA compliance.

Threat actors actively seek opportunities to exploit patients, underscoring the continued importance of leveraging the framework efficiently and comprehensively. Cutting corners in this framework could lead to severe repercussions, ranging from financial penalties to potential mistreatment or, in extreme cases, patient fatalities.

Therefore, it is imperative for healthcare organizations to not underestimate this matter. They should be diligent in selecting the appropriate tools to safeguard both their patients and their organization from potential risks. It is also important to note that even with the aid of this resource guide, healthcare organizations need to undergo the same rigorous compliance process as any other sector.



## THE CHALLENGE

### Navigating 108 “Yes” or “No” Subcategories in a “Maybe” Reality

NIST’s CSF is comprised of 108 subcategories covering a wide range of concepts that, when combined, support organizations in creating a robust and measurable cybersecurity program to manage risk. The challenge is that these subcategories are all created to be addressed in a “yes” or “no” format when cybersecurity programs are rarely, if ever, that simple. HIPAA is not only concerned with “who” has access to “what”, it puts the strongest emphasis on “why” they have access to this information.

Taking this complex perspective into account, many healthcare organizations have adopted a “1-N” relationship where one subcategory could be aligned to multiple practices or tools within information security for ePHI.

How can healthcare organizations uphold the stringent standards outlined by the NIST Framework while also addressing HIPAA’s emphasis on the “why” amidst escalating cyber threats and the genuine, potentially catastrophic consequences of a breach?

The solution lies in seamlessly incorporating the SPHEREboard Identity Hygiene and remediation platform alongside other security components by leveraging SPHERE’s extensive connector library. This comprehensive approach enables organizations to fortify their cybersecurity programs, ensuring both their safety and that of their patients.

#### SUBCATEGORY EXAMPLE

“Access permissions and authorizations are managed, incorporating the principles of least privilege and separation of duties”

**When you break it down, this subcategory consists of not one, but five concepts:**

- › Accounts Provisioning
- › Accounts De-Provisioning
- › Account Modification
- › Account Attestation
- › Remediation “Hygiene”

## THE SOLUTION

### How SPHEREboard’s Capabilities Support NIST CSF & HIPAA Compliance

SPHEREboard is designed not just to align with but to elevate NIST CSF & HIPAA compliance. Our focus on prioritizing Identity Hygiene, fortifying Privileged Access Management practices, and protecting ePHI sets SPHEREboard apart in enhancing your organizations cybersecurity posture.

With these challenges in mind, we developed an Analysis Matrix to align SPHEREboard with the



**Complete** - One or more of SPHEREboard’s capabilities addresses all components of the NIST Stage Subcategory



**Contribute** - One or more of SPHEREboard’s capabilities addresses all components of the NIST Stage Subcategory



**Inform** - SPHEREboard provides insights that can be used to decide HOW to identify and address risk in the NIST Stage Subcategory.

subcategory components of the NIST CSF, employing the following concepts:

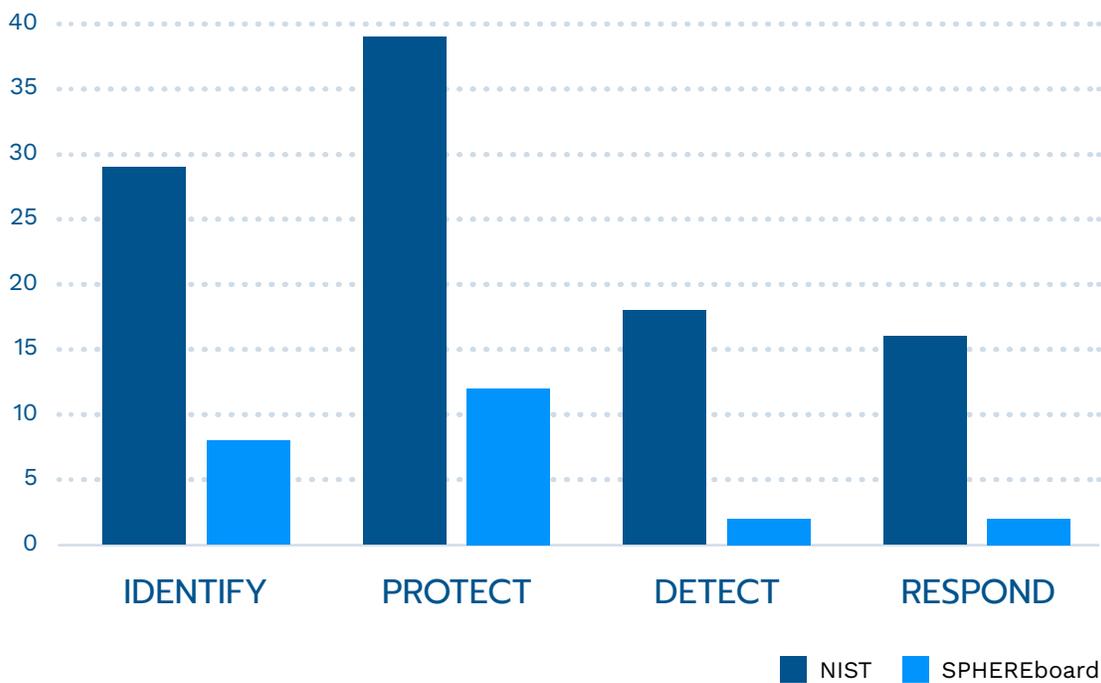
## THE RESULTS

### Mapping SPHEREboard Capabilities to the NIST Framework

To align SPHEREboard’s intelligent discovery, intuitive reporting, and automated remediation capabilities with NIST, we broke these capabilities into four categories within the context of the CSF:

- › **Identify** - SPHEREboard leverages advanced analytics of Accounts, Groups, and identities to identify and evaluate an organizations risk exposure
- › **Protect** - SPHEREboard utilizes intelligent discovery and enforcement of identities related to accounts with elevated permissions, file systems access, collaboration tools, and access groups
- › **Detect** - SPHEREboard automates sustainability processes to ensure controls are met and risk is reduced on an ongoing basis
- › **Respond** - SPHEREboard enables organizations to execute a remediation plan by automating the remediation of control violations

Our evaluations determined that SPHEREboard’s Identity Hygiene capabilities either directly or indirectly supported 24 of NIST’s framework subcategories, with the greatest impact being in the Identify and Protect categories.



## THE VALUE

### SPHEREboard's vital role in your NIST CSF & HIPAA compliance efforts

No single tool can cover all 108 NIST subcategories simultaneously. SPHEREboard, however, focuses on a broad spectrum of categories related to identity and privileged access management. It seamlessly integrates with an extensive array of tools and processes, effectively closing critical gaps in any company's Identity Hygiene program by answering the vital question of "who" has access to "what" and "why".

### SPHEREboard's wide range of capabilities zero in on major components of the NIST framework such as:

- › **Intelligent discovery**  
(NIST CSF Subcategory PR.AC-1, ID.AM-2, RS.MI-2, and more)
- › **Identity, account, and group correlation**  
(NIST CSF Subcategory ID.AM-3, ID.AM-2, ID.GV-3, and more)
- › **Advanced analytics and reporting**  
(NIST CSF Subcategory ID.RA-1, PR.PT-1, ID.AM-2, and more)
- › **Remediation of account, group and data control violations**  
(NIST CSF Subcategory ID.BE-4, RS.MI-2, PR.AC-1, and more)
- › **Sustained protection of an organization's assets**  
(NIST CSF Subcategory PR.AC-4, PR.DS-1, PR.DS-3, PR.DS-5, and more)

You can download the complete list of SPHEREboard's NIST supporting capabilities [here](#).

## LEARN MORE

Explore how SPHERE can support your organization's compliance with the NIST Framework and HIPAA guidelines, providing the assurance that your most critical information, as well as that of your patients, remains secure. [Contact us for more information.](#)



## ABOUT SPHERE

SPHERE is the global leader in Identity Hygiene. We are dedicated to reshaping modern identity programs by embedding this foundational fabric, enabling organizations to quickly reduce risks. Our expertise lies in leveraging automation to deliver immediate time-to-value, providing an identity lens that protects an organization's accounts, data, and infrastructure.

Driven by our core values of passion, empathy, and transparency, our vision drives us to continually innovate, helping our clients to sleep better knowing their attack surface is drastically reduced, thwarting the plans of bad actors every single day.

We're ready to help you address your identity hygiene and security challenges. To find out more about SPHERE and our solutions, please visit [www.sphereco.com](http://www.sphereco.com).

