

Sound Masking Return on Investment for Healthcare Facilities



Sound masking is a proven, cost-effective acoustic solution that protects speech privacy, ensures regulatory compliance, and enhances patient experiences in healthcare environments.

Key ROI Drivers

HIPAA Compliance Mitigation

- Common "overheard PHI" risks in treatment rooms, triage areas, shared rooms, hallways, and common areas
- Sound masking is recognized as a "reasonable safeguard" under HIPAA
- Avoidance or downgrading of Tier 3 violations can save \$10,000 - \$50,000 per incident¹

Patient Comfort & Experience

- Greater speech privacy and quiet improves rest, recovery, satisfaction, and likelihood to recommend³

HCAHPS and Medicare Reimbursement

- HCAHPS "quietness" and "provider communication" scores influence up to \$1.25M in annual reimbursements for large hospitals²
- Modest improvements can lead to significant financial gains in Centers for Medicare-Medicaid Services (CMS) Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) incentive funding

Staff Productivity

- Reduced distraction leads to fewer errors and better performance in high-pressure environments⁴

Sound Masking ROI Estimates by Facility Size

Facility Type	Typical Staff	Est. Square Footage	Installed Cost (@ \$3 / sq. ft.)	Productivity ROI	HIPAA Risk Mitigation	HCAHPS Benefit	Total Annual ROI
Small Clinic	30	4,500	\$13,500	\$42,000	\$10,000+	\$10,000	\$62,000
Midsize Hospital	750	250,000	\$750,000	\$1,050,000	\$50,000+	\$375,000	\$1,475,000+
Large Hospital	3,000	1,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$4,200,000	\$100,000+	\$1,250,000	\$5,500,000+

Assumptions for ROI Calculation:

- Avg salary: \$75,000/year (\$36/hr)
- Daily productivity lost to noise: 1 hr/employee⁵
- Sound masking recovers 15–20% of lost time⁶
- 240 annual workdays
- HCAHPS lift based on 25% of 2% at-risk Medicare reimbursement for each facility size⁷
- HIPAA mitigation: avoidance of a single Tier 3 violation = \$10,000–\$50,000 saved⁴



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Conclusion

Sound masking provides fast payback and measurable annual returns for healthcare facilities. Beyond productivity, the added financial protections from HIPAA compliance and Centers for Medicare-Medicaid Services VBP reimbursement recovery make it an essential investment in modern care environments.

**Need to protect patient privacy and
boost HCAHPS scores?**

**Contact Lencore for a free, customized
quote and design consultation.**

References:

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3. Journal of the Acoustical Society of America (2020). "Speech Privacy in Healthcare Design"
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6. BSI Group (2015). "Productivity in the Modern Workplace."
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