

HIPAA: Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security

Patients and families have every right to assume that confidential information about them will not be discussed among staff and volunteers. You have a legal and ethical duty to maintain confidentiality.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) provides federal government standards and requirements for maintaining and transmitting health information. It defines and protects information that identifies a patient.

Privacy Notice

Patients have a right to know how their information is used, who their information has been shared with and have a right to privacy.

Patients can restrict use and disclosure of health information

- :: “Opt out” of hospital patient directories
- :: Limit amount and kinds of information that can be released

Minimum Necessary and Reasonable Safeguards

- :: Access to minimum necessary information to perform assigned duties
- :: Taking the necessary precautions to keep protected health information from unwanted disclosure

What is Protected Health Information?

- :: Patient name
- :: Medical record number
- :: Address
- :: Names of relatives
- :: Names of employers
- :: Birth date
- :: Social security number
- :: Telephone number
- :: Fax number
- :: E-mail address
- :: Subscriber number
- :: Account number
- :: Certificate/license number
- :: Vehicle serial number
- :: Web/Internet provider address
- :: Fingerprints or voiceprints
- :: Full face photographs





Your Role: Papers, Faxes, Phones

- :: Never leave paper information unattended where other people may view it
- :: Carefully dispose of confidential information and reports (request direction if necessary)
- :: Reasonably verify fax numbers, location of receiving fax machine, identity of person receiving fax
- :: Reasonably verify phone number, identity of person(s) receiving voice mails
- :: Report any errors or mistakes immediately
- :: Violations may result in discipline

Your Role: Sharing Information

- :: Be careful with all oral communications
- :: Before sharing information, verify person's identity
- :: Person may be known to you, or provide picture ID, or call the patient/parent to verify identity
- :: Don't share information with patients' extended family or friends unless parent/patient is present and requests information to be shared, or authorized by parent/patient, or in patient's interest (i.e., emergency)

Your Role: Confidentiality

Volunteers must not:

- :: Disclose confidential patient information
- :: Invade patients' right to privacy by asking why they are in the hospital
- :: Discuss information of a sensitive or confidential nature in public areas
- :: Take photographs of patients and/or their families
- :: Use hospital computers to access information for any other reason than to perform the job
- :: Disclose confidential information about employees, donors, other volunteers, or hospital business
- :: Violate any policy as outlined under HIPAA

Failure to observe the confidentiality policy may result in the volunteer's dismissal from the program.