HIPAA and Patient Privacy

What Providers Need to Know
HIPAA is a Federal law enacted to:

- Protect the privacy of a patient’s personal health information (PHI)
- Provide for the physical and electronic security of PHI
- Simplify billing and other transactions with standardized code sets and transactions
- Protect the rights of individuals over the use of their PHI

HIPAA=Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act
Protected Health Information (PHI) is:

- Name
- Social Security Number
- Demographic Information

Individually identifiable health information, such as

Healthcare providers’ obligations to protect PHI includes all formats: Written, electronic, and oral communication
Health Care providers must make reasonable efforts to protect the privacy and dignity of all patients.

- Avoid public areas when discussing patient care
- When talking to patients, draw curtains, and speak softly so as not to be overheard
- You are permitted to discuss a patient in a public area if necessary, but you cannot use the patient’s name
- Associates are not permitted to access their own, relative’s or friend’s PHI
Clinical Rounds Conducted in Patient Care Areas:

Health care providers may engage in discussions with other health care providers to determine the care plan for a specific patient.

The use or disclosure of PHI is permitted for the purpose of treatment.

As a general rule, on a case by case basis, health care providers must decide how much PHI should be released in order to balance the patient’s right to privacy while ensuring the proper clinical care of the patient.
Case Conferences/Lecture Presentations:

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<th>Case Conferences usually engage multidisciplinary participants in discussions that focus on one or more related patient cases</th>
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<td>This type of education lends itself to the use of de-identified medical information to support the group’s discussion</td>
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<td>When all identifiers of the patient are removed from the presentation materials, there is no disclosure of PHI</td>
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<td>Consequently, the inclusion of any persons who are not involved in the patient’s care does not create a conflict with the privacy rule</td>
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With the patient’s permission:

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<th>You can share necessary information with family, friends, or anyone else a patient identifies as involved in his or her care.</th>
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<td>You can disclose information when needed, to notify a family member or anyone responsible for the patient’s care about the patient’s location or general condition.</td>
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<td>You can share the appropriate information for these purposes even when the patient is incapacitated if doing so is in the best interest of the patient.</td>
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Reference: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)
The Privacy Rule is not anti-electronic.

You can communicate with patients, providers, and others by email, telephone, or facsimile, with the implementation of appropriate safeguards to protect patient privacy.

Reference: www.hhs.gov
The Security Rule requires covered entities to maintain reasonable and appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards for protecting e-PHI.

Reference: www.hhs.gov
## Security Safeguards:

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<td>Don’t share or post passwords</td>
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<td>Secure your workstation, use screen savers, lock your computer if unattended, log off when not in use</td>
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<td>Avoid sending sensitive/confidential patient information via Email or text</td>
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<td>Utilize internet firewalls, monitor and audit usage, utilize virus protection</td>
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Reference: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)
HIPAA and Social Media

- Don’t discuss patients, even in general terms
- Okay to talk about conditions, treatment, research
- Don’t be anonymous
- If you wouldn’t say it in the elevator, don’t put it online

Reference: www.hhs.gov
CHRISTUS Hospital HIPAA Officers

Katerena Byars
Privacy Officer
409.899.8271

Robert Jacobs
Security Officer
409.899–7273

Reference: www.hhs.gov
Thank you for completing this portion of your orientation.

Please return to www.christushospital.org “for new physicians” to complete the remaining required orientation elements.