

Compliance Education

HIPAA Tip Sheet for Personal Care

It is essential that **patients' privacy and confidentiality** is always at the forefront and is everyone's responsibility at Personal Care. **HIPAA** regulations require special care for treating Protected Health Information (PHI) in all written, verbal, and electronic messaging. HIPAA requires staff to adhere to certain rules when using and sharing PHI of its patients.

What is Protected Health Information (PHI)?

PHI includes patient/member name; address, phone number; medical record number, case number, social security number, medical information, diagnosis, insurance information, claim information, photos/videos and any other information that could identify the patient.

Where can PHI be found?

Patient medical record, logs, faxes, paper notes, file cabinets, copy machines, flash drives, emails, computers, etc.

How can I best protect patient information and follow the HIPAA laws and Personal Care policies?

- It is not permissible to invite your family, friends, or children into your patient's home to visit or to spend the night. A patient's address is confidential.
- Your family, friends or others cannot provide care to your patients in your absence. When you are out sick or not able to work, your supervisor will arrange coverage for your patients.
- Never post any photos, videos, or information about patients on social media sites like Facebook or Instagram.
- You are not permitted to transport one patient to another patient's home to provide care.
- You are not permitted to share PHI with anyone except as required by your job.
- Your social security number should not be shared with patients, families, or others.
- Shred all PHI in designated locked bins in each work area. Do not discard in the regular trash.
- Avoid conversations about patients in public places and speak softly when having discussions.
- Lock and secure unattended computers/laptops and secure files especially after working hours.
- Never text or email patient information on personal cell phones.
- Never carry papers with PHI unless it is needed that day. It is not recommended to keep a notebook with PHI.

For routine HIPAA questions, please contact the HIPAA and Privacy Team at their email:

HIPAAandPrivacy.Team@vnshealth.org

Report potential violations via web at www.vnshealth.ethicspoint.com or
via **VNS Health Compliance Hotline** at **1-888-634-1558**