



Privacy and Confidentiality: For Intake Staff



VNS Health

Provider and Corporate Compliance and Regulatory Affairs

November 2022

Privacy and Confidentiality



We are required to protect patient information:

- Law-Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) enacted 1996
- Law-HITECH Health Information and Technology for Economic and Clinical enacted 2009
- HIPAA Policies and Procedures and Code of Conduct on the intranet



Protected Health Information-PHI



CONFIDENTIAL

- Name, address, phone number
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number- Medicare/Medicaid number
- Insurance information
- Case or Medical Record Number
- Email address or fax number
- Admission and Discharge dates
- Relative's contact information
- Credit card number/PIN
- Driver's license information
- Patient photo
- Vehicle or medical device number

Be Careful About Sharing PHI



Although sharing PHI for treatment purposes is part of our job, we need to be careful:

- Paper lists, reports, medical records-limit use
- Conversations, telephone calls-be discreet
- Email, faxing-be cautious

PHI should never be shared on social media



Sensitive PHI- Special Attention

We need to be extra careful* handling and sharing:

- HIV diagnosis and information
- Mental Health Information
- Alcoholic/Drug Treatment Notes
- Social Security Number or Medicare Number
- Credit Card and PIN
- Driver's License

**High risk of identity theft and reportable breach*

Minimum Necessary:

***KNOW THE
RULES!***



- Share only what has been requested
- Don't include sensitive PHI whenever possible
- Share only with those "who need to know" based on their job responsibility
- Never share with PHI with those who are not involved with the patient-not even with colleagues
- Never access or share PHI that is not required for your job

Faxing Tips



- Use fax coversheet with your name/phone/fax and confidentiality statement
- Confirm all fax numbers
- Enter correct fax numbers-double check before sending
- Do not leave fax machine unattended while faxing
- Pick up fax sheets promptly; obtain fax receipts when possible
- Follow up with a call to confirm the fax was received

If you realize you made an error, stop the transmission, if possible, and report the error to your supervisor promptly.

Emailing Tips



- Confirm recipients and email addresses
 - Be careful using automatic Outlook selections
- Be cautious with “reply all”
 - Never send PHI not meant for a particular recipient-review email trail
- Use ENCRYPTME for emails going outside vnsny.org

If you realize you made an error, rescind the email immediately and report the error to your supervisor promptly.

Tips for Paper Documents



- Do not leave PHI unattended in your work area or hospital unit
- Do not leave fax paperwork unattended on the fax machine or printer
- Shred any copies in designated locked bins
- Be cautious when transporting PHI from place to place to avoid loss or stolen documents

If you realize paper work containing PHI is lost or stolen, try to locate it and report the loss to your supervisor promptly.

Reporting Potential Breach Incidents



- All HIPAA incidents are investigated to determine if a breach is substantiated-limited time to comply with investigation and reporting requirements
- Please report incidents to Compliance quickly- you or your supervisor must:
 - Call or email the Compliance team or
 - Call Compliance hotline (can be anonymous) or
 - Complete Breach Incident Report located on the intranet under Corporate Compliance banner

Substantiated Breaches



- May be unintentional or intentional
- May involve one person or many
- Mandated reporting to Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and may need to be reported to other government agencies
- Patient notification required
- May result in violations-fines, criminal penalties
- Corrective actions are mandated to prevent recurrence-education, workflow changes, updated policies/procedures, etc.



Knowledge Check

1. In order to ensure that your email is sent to the correct recipient, it is important to:
 - a. verify the email address and intended recipients
 - b. use a confidential cover sheet
 - c. oversee the transmission
 - d. all of the above

Knowledge Check



2. It is acceptable to discuss patients with other VNS Health colleagues only when:
 - a. it involves any patient referred to VNS Health
 - b. it is related to their job responsibility
 - c. the patient is discharged from the hospital or facility
 - d. the patient is a relative or friend

Knowledge Check



3. You are being asked to email patient information to the contracted DME company for equipment you have ordered, you should:
 - a. attach the entire patient record
 - b. type ENCRYPTME in the subject line
 - c. verify the email address before sending
 - d. both b and c

Knowledge Check



4. The paper documents you were carrying around the hospital on rounds is missing and you have been unable to locate them. You should:

- a. make new copies to replace the lost ones
- b. take no action since these documents were only copies
- c. report the incident in a week if not found by then
- d. report the incident promptly to your supervisor

Knowledge Check



5. You realize you dialed the wrong area code and faxed the patient discharge summary to the wrong fax number. What should you do?
 - a. attempt to stop or interrupt the fax transmission
 - b. take no action since it probably will not go through
 - c. report incident to your supervisor promptly
 - d. both a and c

Q & A Session





Thank You





Reporting Compliance Concerns

- Via Web: www.vnshealth.ethicspoint.com
- VNS Health Compliance Hotline: 888-634-1558