

Creighton University School of Medicine

Medical Education Program Policies

POLICY: Confidentiality of Patient Health Information

GOVERNING BODY: Educational Program Committee

APPROVAL DATE: 7/9/2019

REVISED DATE: N/A

LCME ACCREDITATION STANDARD REFERENCE:

PURPOSE

The policy ensures that students enrolled in the medical education program are compliant with relevant laws and policies regarding the confidentiality of patient medical records.

POLICY

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires that health care professionals and students respect the confidentiality of patient health information. HIPAA privacy rules allow students qualified access to patient information while on rotation. Copies of patient health information are allowed for educational purposes.

Students must adhere to the rules regarding patient confidentiality at all clinical affiliate sites.

Students will be informed about the policies regarding patient confidentiality, their mandate to adhere to university and clinical affiliate policies, monitoring practices of clinical affiliates, and the consequences of failing to adhere to such policies.

Students must follow to the following rules regarding patient records on ANY course at ANY facility:

- A. Regardless of the format (paper, electronic, verbal) and no matter how socially benign, patient information is protected under federal law. It is the work of the student to protect the confidentiality of patient information by keeping that information reasonably secure;
- B. Patient information may never be accessed for inappropriate use;
- C. Students may not grant access to or divulge patient information to anyone who is not authorized to have it;
- D. Students must also adhere to any policies or procedures for accessing information via Creighton University School of Medicine's clinical affiliates. This includes, but is not limited to, CHI Health, Children's Hospital and Medical Center (Omaha, NE), Omaha VA Medical Center, Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, Maricopa Integrated Health System, District Medical Group, Children's Hospital and Medical Center (Phoenix, AZ), and Phoenix VA Health Care System.
- E. Reasonable security for paper includes keeping it in a reasonably secure location, whether at home or in the hospital or other site. It is NOT reasonable to leave papers unattended at a nurse's station or anywhere else;

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- F. Reasonable security for electronic items includes encryption of files or machines and controlling the physical custody of those files and machines (e.g., do not leave your PDA unattended);
- G. Reasonable security for verbal items includes having conversations only with the care team and others in the academic program or class. It also includes having those conversations in a relatively secure location (e.g., not in elevators);
- H. Reasonable security also includes shredding for paper and "cleaning" for electronic records when your program need for that information ends.

PROCEDURE

If a student is found violating patient confidentiality, the student may face discipline through the School of Medicine. If a student fails to follow A-H, the hospital or other site may deny that student and other students the opportunity to participate in rotations at that site.

SCOPE

All students enrolled in the medical education program who have access to patient records.

ADMINISTRATION AND INTERPRETATION

The Office of Student Affairs is responsible for the administration of this policy. Please forward questions to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

AMENDMENT

This policy may be amended by majority vote of the School of Medicine Medical Education Program Educational Program Committee.