

HIPAA “Basic” Handout

What is HIPAA?

"HIPAA" stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. While HIPAA addresses many topics, it also resulted in rules pertaining to the privacy and security of health information. When this document refers to HIPAA, it means those rules. At St. Jude, everyone (including volunteers and students) has a duty to safeguard patient information in any medium. Also, HIPAA also gives patients certain rights, which will be discussed below. Finally, HIPAA requires hospitals such as St. Jude to maintain a number of policies and procedures related to patient rights and the use of patient information.

What do we have to protect?

We have to protect a certain type of patient information, known as "protected health information" or PHI.

How can we use protected health information (PHI)?

Patient information can be used or shared only with the written permission of the patient or guardian, except in limited circumstances. Generally, we may use patient information without the permission of parents or legal guardians to treat the patient, bill insurance, or to use in certain internal operations (such as quality assurance), or if we are required to disclose it by law. Otherwise, we likely need to have a parent or legal guardian's permission or consent known as an Authorization before we can use patient information.

Those employees, volunteers or others who are involved in non-treatment settings such as payment, billing or other internal health care operations should only see patient information on a need-to-know basis or the "minimum necessary" amount in order to perform their job functions.

Volunteer termination

All volunteers deemed unsuitable for continued volunteer service at St. Jude will be terminated and prohibited from further volunteer activity at the hospital. Volunteers may be terminated from volunteer service for:

1. Breach of confidentiality
2. There are only three instances when information may be shared. They relate to what is referred to as
3. "TPO."
4. **a. Treatment** – providing care to patients
5. **b. Payment** – getting paid for caring for patients
6. **c. Operations** – normal business activities such as quality improvement, training, customer services and resolution of grievances.

Your responsibility is to understand HIPAA and confidentiality. Remember:

- Anything you see,
- Anything you hear,
- Anything you read,
- Anything you observe with your five senses,
- Anything you already know about a patient or family....
- Must Be Kept Confidential!

If you have any questions, ask a member of Volunteer Services or contact the St. Jude privacy officer at 595-2341 or through the Confidential Hot Line at 595-4754.