



HIPAA

GOAL

To increase awareness and ensure compliance of HIPAA laws and requirements.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand what HIPAA is.
- Know what is included in PHI (Protected Health Information).
- Know the consequences for non-compliance with the law.

WHAT IS HIPAA?

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) is a law that sets national standards to protect patient privacy and ensure the security of confidential health information.

It is everyone’s responsibility to take the confidentiality and security of patient information seriously.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW?

The privacy and security of patient health information is a priority. It is mandatory that all Job Options staff working in a hospital or medical clinic environment maintain complete compliance with the HIPAA law when assigned to worksites with potential exposure to patient information. Failure to comply will lead to disciplinary action, including possible termination of employment.

WHAT IS PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)?



Protected Health Information (PHI) is any information in a medical record that can be used to identify an individual, and that was created, used, or disclosed in the course of providing a health care service, such as a diagnosis or treatment. HIPAA protects all patient information and establishes rules for when and how healthcare staff members may use or release a patient’s PHI.

PHI includes any information that can be linked to a specific patient, even indirectly. It includes a person’s name, medical record number, financial information, billing information, and health information (like diagnosis codes), or conversations between doctors or nurses about a patient’s treatment. PHI can take any form including paper, electronic, and spoken words.

PHI also includes medical healthcare-related information if it can be linked to one specific patient, including:

- The reason a person is sick or in the hospital
- Treatments and medications a patient may receive
- Test results
- Observations about a patient’s condition
- Discharge planning information



MINIMUM NECESSARY/NEED TO KNOW

Under the Minimum Necessary Rule, staff should only have access to the information needed to fulfill their assigned duties.

As custodial workers in a healthcare setting, **you do not need to have access to any medical information of any patient at your facility to perform your assigned duties.** So it is important for you to remember that you are strictly prohibited from looking at any information about any patient.








A healthcare worker may use or tell someone's PHI **only when it is necessary to perform their job.** Otherwise, disciplinary action is required. Any PHI you see or hear while you're at work, including information you may see or hear about your friends, family, or acquaintances, **must be kept private.** This means **you cannot tell anyone** not even your spouse, your mom or dad, or your best friend. Sharing PHI is a violation of the law.



PRIVACY

Patients receiving medical care expect privacy whether they are in a hospital, a medical clinic, a laboratory, or any other healthcare setting. They expect that caregivers and custodians will not share their PHI with individuals who don't need to know it and we must be respectful to them and their privacy.

Below are some tips to help you protect patient information.

-  Do not discuss patients in elevators, breakrooms, or other public places, both inside and outside the hospital.
-  If you come across PHI that may have been discarded improperly (any item that contains patient information), report it to your supervisor or manager so that it can be appropriately discarded and addressed with medical staff in the area in which it was found. If you are not certain that an item you have found contains PHI, ask your supervisor or manager for clarity.
-  Do not discuss patients with anyone except when it's necessary for work-related purposes only.
-  Don't share information that you inadvertently overhear or see with individuals who don't need the information to perform their jobs.
-  Don't discuss a patient's condition or treatment with their family members or other visitors. Instead, politely refer these individuals to the clinical staff members who can respond to their questions appropriately.





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INCIDENTAL DISCLOSURES

There may be times where you may have incidental access to confidential information. For example, while you're doing your daily tasks, you may overhear a doctor speaking to a patient about his/her diagnosis, or you may hear a therapist discussing a patient's treatment plan. This PHI **must remain confidential**, and you should not share this information with anyone at all.

CASE SCENARIOS

Case Scenario #1: Celebrity Sighting

You walk into a patient's room and are surprised to see Beyonce in the hospital bed. You were so excited that during your break in the cafeteria, you asked other staff members if they know why she is in the hospital. Two other employees hear your conversation and you discuss all the things you love about her. Your conversation seemed harmless because it was among staff members who all work at your site. But something tells you it was inappropriate.

Question: Did you do anything wrong?

Answer: Yes. This is a HIPAA violation. You shouldn't have revealed that Beyonce is a patient. The staff did not need the information to perform their duties so disclosing that Beyonce was there was inappropriate. The information was **confidential** and occurred in a very public area—something you should completely avoid. This violated the patient's privacy.

Remember if a person does not need the information to perform their tasks, it should not be discussed at all.

Case Scenario #2: Sometimes You Need to Vent

You are cleaning a patient room and you recognize a longtime friend of your mother. You chat with her briefly and then return to work. You are careful not to ask about the reason she is hospitalized. Later that evening, you call your mother to tell her that you saw her friend at the hospital.

Question: Did you do anything wrong?

Answer: Yes. Again, this is a HIPAA violation. You may not tell any person, including your family, close friends, or your spouse any information if it's not needed to perform their job assignments. Chatting with the patient is permissible, as long as she initiates the conversation. However, you absolutely should not tell your mother that you saw her friend. Sharing information you learn at work with people outside of the hospital is a HIPAA violation. This patient may not want others to know she is hospitalized or has any illnesses or ailments. Telling your mother that you saw the patient violates her friend's privacy.

The bottom line is that confidential information should be kept CONFIDENTIAL. The rule of thumb is if you aren't sure if the information you have is confidential, stay on the safe side and just keep it to yourself.

THE TAKEAWAYS

If you remember nothing else about this training, at least remember the following:

1. HIPAA protects patient privacy and ensures the security of confidential health information.
2. You do not need access to any medical information to perform your assigned tasks, so do not look at information about any patients at your worksite.
3. If you overhear any medical information about anyone at all, keep it to yourself. Do not share it. Doing so is a HIPAA violation which has steep consequences.





HIPAA

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. HIPAA is a law that protects the privacy and ensures the security of confidential health information.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. What does PHI stand for?
 - a. Public Health Information
 - b. Protected Health Information.
 - c. Physician's Helpful information
3. What are some examples of PHI?
 - a. Name, record numbers, illnesses, treatments, medications
 - b. Length of hair, schools attended, anonymous surveys
 - c. Employment status, favorite colors, hobbies
4. If you're not sure if the information you have is PHI, what should you do?
 - a. Go ahead and share it because you didn't know any better.
 - b. Stay on the safe side and keep it to yourself.
 - c. Keep it a secret between your family, spouse, or best friends.
5. If you see a coworker is a patient in a room that you're working in, is it ok to tell your other coworkers if they know him/her and work at the same place, too?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
6. It is a serious offense if a Job Options employee shares confidential medical information about patients at their place of work even if it is just saying that they saw the patient at the medical facility they work at.
 - a. True
 - b. False
7. Do you have need access to any medical information in order for you to perform your assigned duties at work?
 - a. Yes.
 - b. No

Name: _____ Site: _____

Date: _____