



University of Connecticut Health Center

POLICY NUMBER 2003-25
November 1, 2005

POLICY: USE AND DISCLOSURE INVOLVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS
(Privacy and Security of Protected Health Information (PHI))

PURPOSE:

To describe the situation in which PHI may be disclosed to those persons involved in a patient's care or payment of that care.

SCOPE:

Applies to all patients receiving care within John Dempsey Hospital (JDH), the University of Connecticut Medical Group (UMG), the School of Dental Medicine (SDM), and University Dentists (UD).

- Employees and Faculty
- Volunteers
- Students
- Residents and Fellows
- Credentialed Staff, Agency and Contracted Staff
- Members of the Board of Directors

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The following three methods outline the ways staff will obtain the patient's agreement for any use and/or disclosure of PHI to persons involved in that patient's care or payment for care, to the extent needed, without written authorization. Reasonable efforts will be made to provide the patient the opportunity to object to any use or disclosures of PHI. Reasonable efforts will also be made to identify individuals over the phone.
 - A. A list of family and friends as requested by patients being seen in our facilities will be maintained in the JDH and UMG IDX Registration and Scheduling System. Demographic information of family or friends will be entered into the IDX System in the designated "permission to communicate screen". This screen will be updated/alterd at the patient's request. The information in this section of IDX will be interfaced into the Lifetime Clinical Record (LCR) for inpatient providers/staff to view. This information will also be interfaced to the Quick Recovery System to make Dental providers/staff aware. Staff may speak with the individual(s) noted in IDX/LCR "permission to communicate screen" regarding PHI relating to the patient, his/her plan of care and/or financial status.

- B. In addition to using the “permission to communicate screen” in IDX/LCR, disclosure is also permitted when a patient is present in person and indicates that a family member or friend may remain with the patient during discussion of the patient’s medical and/ or financial information.
 - C. When the patient is not present, is unable to communicate due to a medical condition, or unable to comprehend due to cognitive impairment and the patient has not given us prior approval to communicate available in IDX/LCR, the staff may use their judgment to determine whether the specific disclosure is limited to the friend or family member’s involvement in the patient’s care and the disclosure is in the patient’s best interest or if reasonable inferences indicate that it is in the patient’s best interest to permit a friend or family member who is acting on the patient’s behalf, to be exposed to protected information. In situations such as these, the patient’s inability to comprehend and subsequent discussion with family or friends must be documented in the medical or dental record, and at the earliest possible time. Staff will obtain and enter valid “permission to communicate” contact names into the IDX registration system.
2. Discussion with the patient giving permission or documentation of the patient’s inability to comprehend and subsequent discussion with family or friend must be documented in the medical or dental record.
 3. This policy does not apply to Correctional Managed Health Care patients unless authorized by Connecticut Department of Correction (CDOC)

Reference: 164.150 (b) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
UCHC Policy: Verification of individuals or Entities Requiring Disclosure of PHI

Iris Mauriello (signed)

10/26/05

Privacy Officer

Date

Peter Deckers, MD (signed)

10/31/05

Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Date

Replaces: Policy dated March 28, 2005