



University of Connecticut Health Center

POLICY NUMBER 2003-26

April 14, 2003

**POLICY: **DIRECTORY INFORMATION:
DISCLOSURE OF A PATIENT'S INFORMATION
(Privacy & Security of Protected Health Information (PHI))****

PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines to staff and Information Desk volunteers regarding disclosure of Directory information to family, friends, clergy and media about a patient at John Dempsey Hospital.

SCOPE:

Patients on in-patient units, (with the exception of Psychiatric and CDOCunits), Adult Ambulatory Care, Emergency Department and Surgi-center patients are included in the JDH Information Desk Directory.

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. Directory information at John Dempsey Hospital is defined as:

- Patient name
- Patient location (room number and telephone number)
- Patient Religious affiliation

2. All inquiries should be forwarded to the Information Desk or telephone operators, as these are the only areas that can provide directory information. Except for clergy, directory information is released only if the patient is asked for by name.

3. Information to the media will not include patient location, and is described in the policy titled: 03-005, Media Relations, in the John Dempsey Hospital Administrative Manual.

PROCEDURE:

1. Patients will be notified in the Notice of Privacy Practices and as part of the pre-admission or admission process, that their location will be given to any caller who asks for them by name.

If patients object, their name will not appear in the directory.

- a. Directory information will be entered by staff in the IDX admission system
- b. Patient decision will be effective for current admission only
- c. For non-clergy, only patient location (room and telephone number) is given

2. Patients have the right to restrict or prohibit some or all of the disclosures in the directory.

- Any restrictions or objections will be entered by staff in the IDX admission system.
- a. Any restrictions or objections will be entered by staff in the IDX admission system
 - b. Any restrictions or objections are valid for the current admission only.
 - c. UCHC can only accept restriction to keep patient totally out of directory, and/or clergy directory.
3. Religious affiliation information is given to clergy as per Volunteer Services Manual unless patient objects. If patient objects, this objection is entered in IDX ADT system, and will not be available in the Clergy reports.
4. In emergency situations or patient incapacity, the patient's expressed preference at last admission will be consulted. The decision whether or not to disclose information will be consistent with this prior preference if it is in the best interest of the patient. If there is no prior preference on record, professional judgment shall be exercised.

This decision, and by whom it was made, will be noted in the admission remarks by staff completing admission in computer system. In these circumstances, the patient must later be given the opportunity to object to the decision made by the health care provider. This is the responsibility of the Financial Counselor who is otherwise responsible for reviewing that admission. The Financial Counselor will update information in ADT system. If patient makes known his/her preference before Financial Counseling has reviewed admission, staff will notify Registration/Financial Counseling by phone and have information updated immediately.

5. John Dempsey Hospital may release patient directory information to anyone authorized by law to assist in disaster relief efforts. (e.g. other hospitals, health care facilities, relief agencies, law enforcement agencies). JDH may also disclose directory information to notify or assist in the notification of a family member, a personal representative or another person responsible for the patient's care of the patient's location, general condition or death.

Reference: § 164.510 (a) (b) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996
John Dempsey Hospital Administrative Manual 03-005, Media Relations
Volunteer Services Manual

Iris Mauriello (signed)

2/12/03

Privacy Officer

Date

Peter Deckers, M.D. (signed)

2/14/03

Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Date

Replaces: NEW POLICY