Use of Protected Health Information in Education

Clinical education and training activities of The University of Chicago Medicine (UCM) students, including residents and fellows are fundamental to the UCM mission. However, it is important that we use and disclose protected health information (PHI) for these activities in a manner that follows the HIPAA regulatory requirements.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule allows physicians and staff to use and disclose PHI without a patient’s written authorization for purposes related to treatment, payment, and health care operations. It defines “health care operations” to include “to conduct training programs in which students, trainees, or practitioners in areas of health care learn under supervision to practice or improve their skills as health care providers.” As such, UCM physicians and staff can use PHI, without a patient’s written authorization, to teach medical residents, medical students, nursing students, and other clinical students or trainees, in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. **The Use and Disclosure Must Be Internal**: The PHI must stay within The University of Chicago Medicine (Medical Center and BSD). It cannot be shared outside UCM (including to students, faculty, and staff of non-BSD parts of The University of Chicago), at professional meetings, conferences and lectures, and for non-UCMC courses, etc.

2. **Minimal Information**: The amount of PHI used must be the minimum amount necessary to conduct the training.

   Example #1: In an on-campus lecture showing a radiologic image of a foreign object, if possible, remove the patient name, medical record number, dates, and any other information that could lead to the identification of the patient that is not necessary to the training. Only show the foreign object and the relevant anatomy.
Example #2: In UCM grand rounds presentation/discussion about a patient’s tumor, only include information relevant to the case. In other words, potentially only include race, age, other medical conditions, prior medical conditions, and other background information only if necessary to accomplish the medical training. Do not include the patient’s name and medical record number. In addition, do not talk about other identifying characteristics if it is not necessary to the discussion, for example the patient’s job, job title, where they work, where they live, their community activities, etc.

UCM physicians and staff may not use PHI in any research, case studies, articles, industry conferences/lectures, posters, fliers, or any other material or media unless:

- The physician obtains the patient’s permission, and the patient signs a written authorization which would be maintained in the patient’s medical record; or
- The PHI is de-identified according to Policy 05-22 Use and Disclosure of Limited Data Set and De-identified Health Information or the PHI is aggregated with a sufficient number of other data such that the PHI could not be linked to one particular patient.

UCM physicians and staff may not search UCM databases or applications (e.g. Epic) to data mine for interesting trends or patient cases to use for educational/training activities. Requests for data are handled through the Analytics Core Request System (ACReS). Upon approval, the appropriate data analyst will provide the minimum amount of information necessary to satisfy the request. In circumstances where a patient is to be photographed or videotaped for training purposes, the physician will seek the patient’s permission in accordance with Policy A02-11 Photographs and Other Images in the Hospital.

**Any questions/comments/concerns please feel free to reach out to the Privacy Program at:**

773-834-9716 or hpo@bsd.uchicago.edu