T H E   U N I V E R S I T Y   O F
CHICAGO
HIPAA Program Office

Looking Up Patient PHI – Know the Limits and Consequences

As an employee at UCMC, maintaining a patient's privacy is part of your job. You should be looking up a person's protected health information (PHI) <u>only</u> when it is required for your job. Simply because you <u>can</u> see a person's PHI does not mean you <u>should</u>.

Snooping in a person's PHI can lead to disciplinary action, *up to and including termination*. The HIPAA Program Office routinely and randomly conducts audits on access to patient records.

To help maintain patient privacy and confidentiality, follow these guidelines:

- Look up a medical record **only** when it is required for your job.

- Do not look up medical records of co-workers, friends, family members or celebrities unless it is required by your job.

- Remember the "minimum necessary" standard: only look up the minimum necessary amount of PHI to get your job done.

- Log off/lock your computer when you leave your workspace. You will be held responsible for all activity under your User I.D.

All of our patients are entitled to privacy and confidentiality. Do your part, and only look up information you need to know.

Link on to the following policies and guidance:
Policy: Patient Privacy and Confidentiality
Policy: Minimum Necessary Requirements
Policy: Employee Termination
HPO Guidance, "When a Co-Worker is a UCMC Patient."
HPO Guidance, "Medical Center Employees Accessing Personal Health Information."

For more information, please contact the HIPAA Program Office at 4-9716