TELEPHONE MESSAGE GUIDELINES

What information can I leave with someone that answers the patient’s telephone?

**Verify Identity.** Please verify the identity of the person you are speaking with. Make sure the person you are talking to is the patient or someone who is entitled to the information. Ask the person to supply information about the patient – the patient’s birth date and home address.

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1. If you can verify that the person is the patient, you can provide any information.

2. If the person you are leaving a message with is not the patient, use the same guidelines as for an answering machine or voicemail outlined below. Be Alert. If the person you are speaking with asks you for additional information regarding the patient’s condition or the purpose of the visit, do not provide them with that information unless you have a documented authorization from the patient to release information to specific 3rd parties.

What information can I leave on a patient’s voice mail or answering machine?

**For Appointment Reminders:** Please state that you are calling from the University of Chicago, clinic name if necessary, the date of the appointment if applicable and callback number. Again be especially careful not to leave a message in a manner that may allow someone else to learn private information about someone else.

**Sample Automated Appointment Reminder Messages**

Hello, this is The University of Chicago Hospitals <insert clinic name> Clinic calling to confirm an appointment on <insert appt date/time > To avoid delays please arrive 15 min before your appointment and remember to bring insurance card. Please bring a list of medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements that you are currently taking. We are located in Center for Advance Medicine in Module <insert location>. The address is 5758 S. Maryland Ave., Chicago, IL 60637. For directions to the Center for Advance Medicine you can visit our website at http://www.uchospitals.edu, or press 0 to be transferred to our directions line. You can also dial 773-702-5580. If you are unable to keep this appointment please call within 24 hours of your scheduled date and time to avoid a no show fee. If you have any questions or wish to cancel your appointment please call 773-702-xxxx. Please be advised that the Dan Ryan I90/94 Expressway will be under construction from March 2006 through December 2007. Several lane closures for the duration of the construction project will cause significant delays. Please plan your travel to and from the University of Chicago Hospitals accordingly. Alternate Routes are available at www.dannyanexpressway.com, or by calling 800-UCH-0200. We look forward to seeing you on <insert appt date/time >. Press start to repeat this message. Thank you and have a nice day.
For Lab Results, Medication Refill Requests, Returning Messages, Test Prep, Follow-up after Surgery and other clinical reasons: Please state that you are calling from the University of Chicago and provide a return call number. If you need to provide additional information, tell them you have additional information for them and how to obtain it (i.e.: you will mail it, they can call back during specific hours, etc). In cases where you need to be sure and discuss information with the patient before an appointment (pre-operative instructions), please call 48-72 hours before the scheduled appointment to be sure you touch bases with the patient directly. NOTE: Please don’t leave specific information such as lab results, name of medication, type of test, or physician name on the answering machine.

In all instances:

Be especially careful with Highly Confidential Information. (a mental illness or developmental disability, HIV/AIDS testing or treatment, communicable diseases, venereal diseases, substance (i.e., alcohol or drug) abuse, abuse of an adult with a disability, sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, or genetic testing). You should never leave a message containing Highly Confidential Information.