

**USE AND DISCLOSE PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI) FOR
 PATIENT APPOINTMENTS/TELEPHONE MESSAGES**

The HIPAA Privacy Rule permits UCMC to communicate with patients regarding their health care. This includes communicating with patients at their homes, whether through the mail, by phone, or in some other manner. In addition, the Rule does not prohibit UCMC employees from leaving messages for patients on their answering machines or with individuals who may answer the phone (e.g. the patient's family member). However, to reasonably safeguard the individual's privacy, employees must take care to limit the amount of information disclosed on the answering machine or shared with the individual who answers the phone when the patient is not home.

Employees should use professional judgment to assure that disclosures related to the patient's appointment is done in the best interest of the patient and should limit the information disclosed.

#	Question	Answer
1.	What actions should I take when leaving appointment information with someone that answers the patient's telephone?	<p>Verify the identity of the person with whom you are speaking. Make sure the person you are talking to is the patient or someone who is entitled to the information before disclosing patient information. Ask the person to supply information about the patient – for example, the patient's birth date and home address.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>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.</p>
2.	What information can I leave on a patient's voice mail or answering machine regarding his/her appointment (e.g. appointment reminders)?	<p>For all clinics except <i>Outpatient Psychiatry, Infectious Disease, Genetic Testing, Oncology, and Ob-Gyn</i>, you may leave the following information on a patient's voicemail or answering machine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">• 1st name of patient <li style="width: 50%;">• Appointment Date <li style="width: 50%;">• The physician's last name <li style="width: 50%;">• Appointment Time <li style="width: 50%;">• University of Chicago Medical Center <li style="width: 50%;">• Callback Number <li style="width: 50%;">• Building/Module Name (e.g. DCAM 4D). <p>DO NOT LEAVE THE CLINIC NAME ON THE VOICEMAIL OR MACHINE</p> <p>Be especially careful not to leave a message in a manner that may allow someone else to learn private information about someone else. <i>In particular, do not leave the patient's full or partial medical record number as a unique identifier for the patient to use when returning your call.</i></p> <p>Alternatively, if you are unable to include the patient's first name and physician's last name when using an "automated" messaging solution (i.e. PhoneTree), you may leave the clinic name and location, and date and time of the appointment.</p>

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3.	<p>If I work in <i>Outpatient Psychiatry, Infectious Disease, Genetic Testing, Oncology, and Ob-Gyn</i> clinics what techniques can I use to communicate appointment reminders?</p>	<p>These types of clinic/service visits are considered highly confidential, thus require additional safeguards for protecting patient privacy.</p> <p>If you work in one of these clinics, you can communicate with patients about their appointments via the telephone or use an automated phone tree; however you should leave a less specific voicemail or other message. For example, "We are calling to remind a member of this household of their appointment at UCMC on _____. Please call _____ for details..</p> <p>Alternatively, you can communicate with patients about their appointments in writing such as letters and postcards.</p> <p>Postcards displaying appointment information should NOT be used. If postcards are used, please insert the postcard in a separate envelope and mail it to the patient. Alternatively, a letter can be sent containing the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient full name • The physician's last name • Appointment date • Building name, module, and location address • Appointment time • Callback number <p>Do not include the Clinic Name in the "return address" section of the mailing envelope. The reason is so that individuals picking up the mail will not immediately know the name of the clinic sending the information. The "return address" should only contain the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University of Chicago Medical Center • Mail Code # • Street, City, Zip
4.	<p>Can I leave Highly Confidential Information on a patient's voicemail or answering machine?</p>	<p>No. You should never leave Highly Confidential Information (<i>a mental illness or developmental disability, HIV/AIDS, communicable/venereal diseases, substance (e.g. alcohol or drug) abuse of an adult with a disability, sexual assault, child abuse and neglect, or genetic testing</i>) on a patient's voicemail or answering machine.</p>

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5.	What are some examples of an appointment reminder message that can be left on a patient's voicemail or answering machine?	<p>“Hello. This is Dr. Smith’s office at the University of Chicago Medical Center calling for Bob. We want to remind you of your appointment in the Center of Advanced Medicine Module 4D located at 5758 South Maryland Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637 at 10am on Tuesday, September 9th. Please call us at (telephone number) to confirm. 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 (telephone number). Thank you.”</p> <p>“Hello, this is the University of Chicago Medical Center’s Cardiology Clinic calling to confirm an appointment on (insert appointment date and time). To avoid delays please arrive 15 minutes before your appointment and remember to bring your insurance card. We are located in the Center for Advance Medicine in Module 5C. The address is 5758 S. Maryland Avenue., Chicago, Illinois 60637. If you have any questions or wish to cancel your appointment, please call 773-702-9461. We look forward to seeing you on (insert appointment date and time). Thank you.””</p>
6.	What should I do and say when calling a patient’s home about lab results, medication refill requests, returning messages, test preparation, follow up after surgery, and other clinical reasons?	<p>You may state that you are calling from Dr. Smith’s office at the University of Chicago Medical Center and provide a return call number.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Please don’t leave specific information such as lab results, name of medication, and type of test on the answering machine or with an individual taking the message on the patient’s behalf.</p>