

# HIPAA

## Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act

### WHAT IS HIPAA?

- It is a federal law that provides for improved employee health plan access.
- It provides new national requirements for protecting and safeguarding patient medical and other related records.

### WHAT IS PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)?

As defined by HIPAA, PHI is any information that is gained in the care of a patient. PHI includes information that can be used to identify a patient (name, address, social security number, etc.) and health information. PHI can be used for treatment, payment, and healthcare operation purposes. Examples are:

- Name or Date of Birth
- Addresses, Telephone or Fax Number
- Social Security Number
- Email Address
- Driver's License Number, License Plate or Vehicle ID Number
- Progress Notes, Diagnostic and Treatment Information

### WHAT CAN HEALTH PROVIDERS DO UNDER HIPAA?

- Patient care can be coordinated between physicians, nurses, and other members of the team taking care of the patient (including referrals, transfer of care, and obtainment of treatment information).
- You can still seek assistance from other nurses that are not providing care to your patient.

### WHAT IS UNAUTHORIZED INCIDENTAL DISCLOSURE?

HIPAA and state laws mandate that patient information be kept confidential. Employees, visitors, and volunteers may overhear or see information that is PHI. These disclosures are called *incidental*.

#### To avoid incidental disclosures:

- 1) Be sure to use confidential disposal bins for disposal of any written materials that may identify a patient.
- 2) Do not leave computer screens on with confidential information.
- 3) Do not try to read other computer screens with confidential information.
- 4) Do not unnecessarily read any part of a medical record, even if the record belongs to a neighbor, friend, or family member.

- 5) Lower your voice when discussing patient information.
- 6) Move conversations about patient information away from others.
- 7) Be aware of your surroundings when discussing or viewing patient information.
- 8) Act in a manner that others view as professional and one that guards confidential information.
- 9) Avoid patient discussions between you and your co-workers in lobbies, elevators, cafeterias, smoking areas, and especially outside the hospital or clinical site.

### **WHAT IS THE SECURITY RULE?**

- The Security Rule, like the HIPAA Privacy Rule, is a regulation mandated by federal law to protect ePHI. When PHI is in an electronic form, it is called ePHI.
- Examples of ePHI are PHI displayed on a monitor screen, in an email, or saved on a floppy disk.

### **HOW CAN I KEEP INFORMATION SECURE?**

- Keep passwords and PINs private and to yourself. Oakwood's IT team will never ask for your log in or password.
- Limit personal and business information provided to Internet vendors.
- Remember, Emails are not private and are Oakwood's business property. Consider who you are emailing and what information is being emailed. Determine whether the email is encrypted or sent through a private network. and if the communication is consistent with privacy rules.
- Report suspicious emails, such as spam or chain letters, to *Client Support at extension 44121*.
- Use Internet for work-related needs only. Your Internet activity is logged and monitored.
- Secure your workstation by locking the computer or logging off the computer.

### **HOW DO I REPORT A SECURITY INCIDENT OR HIPAA VIOLATION?**

*Notify your clinical instructor and clinical manager, charge nurse, or preceptor right away.*

You can also use the OHI Compliance Hotline (800.805.2283) to make a report and your identity can be completely confidential.