E-Mail Tips to Safeguard Patient Information

The shared e-mail directory includes the addresses of health care providers, staff and many others.

Many of these people have names that are similar or even the same. It is critical that all of us take the time to verify the address before sending an e-mail containing confidential information including protected health information (PHI).

E-mail containing PHI may be transmitted for any permissible use and disclosure of PHI in accordance with the “Use and Disclosure of PHI” policy.

**The subject line of the e-mail should not contain the patient name.** It may contain the medical record number, patient account number and/or date of service.

**Verify** the "to" field prior to sending the message, to ensure positive identification of the person to whom you are sending the e-mail.

If you ever realize after sending an e-mail containing confidential information that you’ve misdirected it, **contact the Help Desk at 402-559-7700 immediately** to report the error. Misdirected e-mail containing PHI may require notification to the patient and the US Department of Health and Human Services. The Privacy Office makes these notifications after conducting a risk assessment.

If you have received an e-mail containing PHI in error, notify the sender immediately.

Review the policy, “E-MAIL CONTAINING PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION” for more information, including detailed information about: communicating via e-mail with established and new patients; e-mail to individuals for educational purposes; and e-mail from individuals asking health-related questions.

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