

NURSING EDUCATION SERVICES

GENERAL POLICIES

HIPAA Requirements for Learners

All institutions in healthcare must comply with the federal regulations of the Administration Simplification Subtitle of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). This Act requires that individually identifiable patient information may not be disclosed without the patient's consent or knowledge. Since healthcare institutions are mandated to follow HIPAA regulations, learners are required to abide by HIPAA while participating in a clinical setting.

Care must be taken to minimize incidental disclosures of personally identifying information unless the information is being used for treatment purposes. For example, if someone must administer a medication, they will have full access to the patient's medical record because the use of the information is for treatment. This is covered by the patient's consent for treatment. To protect patient/client privacy, learners must remove all personally identifying information from assignments, such as care plans and case studies.

Information to be removed includes the individual's name, initials, address, phone number, email address, fax number, and Social Security number. Written documents containing private health information must be either carefully stored or shredded to prevent the circulation of confidential patient information. Improper circulation of confidential patient information may include oral communications and electronic data, images, or photographs, which extend beyond the "need to know" for treatment and/or educational purposes.

HIPAA is a federal law. Penalties for wrongful disclosure range from fines to imprisonment.

Potential Exposure

All learners who could be exposed to blood or other potentially infectious materials in a clinical setting are covered under the Potential Exposure policy.

Post-exposure Evaluation and Follow-up

Should an exposure incident occur, the learner should immediately notify the clinical faculty member or preceptor who is responsible for the learning experience in which the learner is engaged. Prompt reporting of all exposures is crucial to ensuring that timely medical evaluation and treatment, if applicable, are initiated. Both faculty and learners are expected to follow all applicable policies, protocols, and guidelines for exposure reporting.

Medical clearance may be requested by the College or its partners in the case of exposure to infectious diseases (e.g. COVID-19) to ensure learner, faculty, patient, and community safety. In the event of a life-threatening injury, learners should call 911.