



Handling of Subpoenas

If you or your office receive a subpoena requesting patient health information, including billing information, you should immediately fax the subpoena to the HIPAA Office (410-735-6520). The HIPAA Office will review the subpoena for compliance with state and federal medical records privacy requirements and will fax back instructions about how to proceed. Subpoenas from the Maryland Board of Physicians should be faxed to the Legal Department (410-955-0636, Attn: Nancy Gregor). Questions involving HIPAA and privacy requirements should be directed to the HIPAA Office (410-735-6509 or 410-735-6502). All other questions should be directed to Meg Garrett or Nancy Gregor in the Legal Department (410-955-7949).

Use of Patient Aliases

The use of patient aliases is strongly discouraged because of many practical and safety issues. If a physician believes that there is a compelling reason for using an alias for a patient, the physician should contact the Legal Department prior to the patient's admission, if practicable, or as soon after admission as possible. The use of an alias requires close coordination with Medical Records, Admissions, and Billing Offices, among others. Questions should be directed to Meg Garrett or Nancy Gregor in the Legal Department (410-955-7949).

Requests to Amend Medical Records

When a patient requests an amendment to his or her "final" medical record, it is not a simple matter of responding "yes" or "no" to the patient. Both HIPAA and state law come into play. When a patient requests such an amendment, the patient must complete and sign HIPAA form A.6.3.a, "Request To Amend My Protected Health Information". The form is available on the Johns Hopkins HIPAA Intranet site. (Go to webpage www.insidehopkinsmedicine.org/hipaa and select the Forms/Policies for Providers link on the left hand side of the page.)

The completed request must be sent to the Johns Hopkins HIPAA Privacy Officer. There are certain standards and procedures required by HIPAA as well as certain time lines that must be met. The HIPAA office keeps extensive records on this process in the event of a complaint. Keep in mind that Maryland law provides that a patient may not have any information deleted from his/her medical record. (The HIPAA office interprets this to mean to a signed entry, not to entries that have not been finalized by signing.) The HIPAA Privacy Regulations require us to have a licensed health care provider review the amendment request and determine whether it is appropriate to make the requested amendment. The Johns Hopkins Privacy Officer works with Dr. Beryl Rosenstein, VPMA, to have these requests reviewed.

Prohibited Abbreviations

The JCAHO has amended the regulation on the use of prohibited abbreviations to include all documentation related to medications, both handwritten and electronic.

Annual Employee TB Screening

Hospital policy, in response to state and federal regulations, requires that every employee who has patient contact or works in patient-care areas be screened yearly for tuberculosis (TB). All employees fitting these criteria need to be screened, whether they are positive or negative PPD responders. To increase accessibility to Occupational Health for this important screening, the OHS staff will offer TB screening outside the main cafeteria in the Broadway Corridor on Monday, January 9; Wednesday, January 11 and Friday, January 13, 2006 from 8 a.m. till 4 p.m.

Event: Annual Employee TB Screening
Sponsor: Occupational Health Services
Dates: January 8, 11 and 13
Time: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Location: Broadway Corridor at the East Baltimore Campus

Please call Occupational Health Services at 410-955-6211 if you have any questions.

Brin Lecture

Event: Brin Lecture in Medical Ethics
Title: “The Differential Diagnosis of Conflicts Over ‘Futile’ Care”
Speaker: Robert M. Arnold, M.D.
Sponsor: The Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center
Date: February 2, 2006
Time: 4:30 - 6 p.m.
Location: Hurd Hall

2006 Risk Management Seminars

Risk Management Seminars will be held on the following dates in Hurd Hall. Contact your departmental credentials coordinator if you are unsure whether you need to attend.

- 1/18/06, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- 2/15/06, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- 3/11/06, 11 a.m. – 12 noon
- 4/11/06, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- 5/16/06, 5:30-6:30 p.m.
- 6/13/06, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

If you have questions, call the Legal Department at 955-7949.

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