Policy Title
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

Identifier
USCSOMG – STAF – 7.1

Prepared by: Office of Student Affairs
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Effective Date: 07/16/2018

Scope
University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students

Policy Statement
The USC School of Medicine Greenville is committed to ensuring students protect the privacy of patients and their health information. Privacy of personal health information is guided by certain state laws as well as by the Privacy Rule of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), effective April 14, 2003. This policy defines the general uses and disclosures of patient information and processes related to protecting the confidentiality of patient information in compliance with the HIPAA Privacy Rule.

Definitions
A. Protected Health Information: Is individually identifiable health information which includes:
   ● All information, data, documentation and materials (written, oral, visual or electronic) including demographic, medical and financial information collected from an individual or that is created or received by the health system that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual.
   ● The provision of health care to an individual.
   ● The past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual, that identifies the individual
   ● With respect to which there is a reasonable basis to believe the information can be used to identify the individual.

B. Use or Disclosure of Protected Health Information: Means the sharing, employment, application, utilization, examination or analysis of such information by the student or healthcare employee

Reason for Policy
Patient Protection

Procedures
Mandatory HIPAA training is required during medical school orientation and annually thereafter. The material
contained in all medical records is highly confidential and is not to be disclosed to any unauthorized person. Records are not to be removed from the patient care and study areas of the institution, under penalty of immediate disciplinary action.

Students will not photograph or create any identifiable likeness of a patient without the specific permission of the institution and written permission of the patient involved. Medical students are not to converse with or provide any material regarding patients or their medical records to friends or relatives, representatives from the news media or law enforcement or any other unauthorized agency or person. At times, the proper department within each hospital will direct release of information. Any request for information should be referred to the department chair or clerkship director responsible for the rotation.

If copies of records are made for the purpose of presentations on rounds or at a conference, these copies must be in the possession of the student at all times or else be destroyed. During formal case presentations (e.g. teaching conferences and grand rounds), the patient should be identified only by initials. Special care should be taken in discussing patients (with or without identification of the patient) in public areas (elevators, hallways, cafeterias, canteens, etc.) since patients, friends and families may overhear. Such discussions may result in disclosure of privileged information or may produce unnecessary anxiety on the part of the patient, family or friends.

**Sanctions**
Referral to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) and/or Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC)

**Additional Contacts**
Office of Student Affairs
Office of Academic Affairs
Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC)
Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC)

**Related Information**
USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook
GHS Policy: S-015-01 Uses and Disclosures of Protected Health Information – General Privacy Rules
USCSOMG-STA5-5.4-Social Media and Social Networking
(US) Health and Human Services-Health Information privacy

**History**
- Date of Change: 06/04/2018
- Change: Move to standardized template
- Reason for Change: LCME CQI