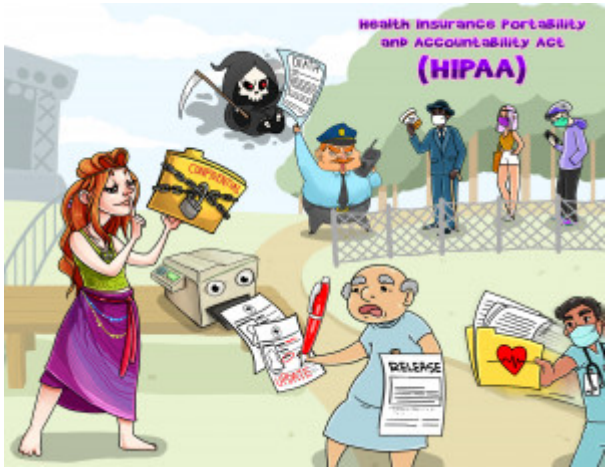
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) supports patient confidentiality and autonomy. Any patient health information must be kept private and secure, and it is not shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the patient's care. HIPAA provides patients with rights regarding their personal health information (PHI). Their rights include the right to see and have a copy of their health information, update and correct their health record, the use and disclosure of their records, and how they would like to receive their health information. There are three cases in which patient authorization to disclose PHI is not required. These include situations with public health activities, law enforcement, and deceased people.



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Protected Health Information

Confidentiality

Confidential Lock-and-key

Any patient health information must be kept private and secure. Patient health information is not shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the patient's care. Nurses should view only the health information related directly to the care they are provided and what will help provide safe and effective care.

HIPAA Patient Rights

See and Copy Health Records

Copy of Health Records

Under HIPAA rights, patients have the right to see and get a copy of their health records. In order to get a copy of the records, many facilities will request that a form is filled out to obtain the record.

Update and Correct Health Record

Editing Health Record

Patients have the right to update their health records. If the patient notices any inaccuracies in their medical records, they can ask that it be corrected. They may also inquire about adding information to the file if it's incomplete or change something they disagree with.

Use and Disclosure of Protected Health Information

Release Form

HIPAA allows patients to get a list of any health record disclosures that have been made besides disclosures made for treatment, payment, and health care services. A patient can also request a restriction on certain uses or disclosures.

How to Receive Health Information

Receiving Health FIles

Patients have a right under HIPAA to choose how they would like to receive their health information.

Permitted Disclosure of Personal Health Information (PHI) Without Patient Authorization

Public Health Activities

Public-people

Public health activities are one of the exceptions where patient authorization is not required. Patient information can be accessed to track and notify about disease outbreaks, infection control, or statistics associated with harmful issues with drugs or medical equipment.

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Law Enforcement

Police

Permitted disclosure of PHI also includes criminal incidents. Medical records that are essential to an investigation of a crime or any documents needed to identify victims of a crime may be accessed without authorization. Incidences of child abuse, neglect, or domestic violence also qualify.

Deceased People

Death Certificate

Patient authorization for PHI release is not required in situations with coroners and medical examiners. They are also unnecessary to facilitate organ donations and in cases of death from a potential crime.

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