

# PHI - It's More Than You Think!

## What is HIPAA?

The **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)** is a federal law that requires Covered Entities and their Business Associates to protect the privacy and security of identifiable health information. It also gives patients certain rights with respect to their information.

## What is PHI?

**Protected Health Information (PHI)** is individually identifiable health information held or transmitted by a Covered Entity or Business Associate.

**When health information is paired with any identifier, it is "PHI" and subject to HIPAA's protections. There are 18 types of information that are considered "identifiers" under HIPAA.**

- Names (including partial names)
- Any geographic area smaller than a state (including address, city, county, state, or zip code)
- All elements of dates more specific than a year that relate to an individual (including birth date, treatment-related dates and times)
- Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers
- Fax numbers
- Device identifiers and serial numbers
- Email addresses
- Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs)
- Social security numbers
- Internet Protocol (IP) addresses
- Medical record numbers
- Biometric identifiers, including finger prints and voice prints or recordings
- Health plan beneficiary numbers
- Identifiable images
- Account numbers
- Certificate or license numbers
- Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code (e.g., study ID numbers, large amounts of genetic information)

## Tips for Safeguarding PHI:

- Epic is for work-related purposes only. To check your record or those you may have proxy access to, use MyChart. **DO NOT SNOOP!**
- Do not post about the Health System, patients, physicians, or co-workers on social media
- Do not take photos in your work environment
- Log off computers when stepping away or not in use
- Secure all PHI, especially in public areas
- Check and re-check identifiers (at least two) before sharing information with patients or handing out documentation, to make sure you're sharing with the right person
- Think before emailing PHI outside of UVA Health, including to a virginia.edu email address. Ask yourself if you are allowed to send PHI outside of the Health System. If you are, you must put [SECURE] in the subject line of the email
- Ask patients if it's OK to speak about their health information when in public spaces or visitors are with them

## Reporting - If you see or hear something that concerns you:

- Talk to your Supervisor, Manager, Administrator
- Compliance & Privacy Office Phone: 1.877.266.7632 (1.877.COMPOFC)
- Compliance & Privacy Central Email: [CommunityHealthCompliance@uvahealth.org](mailto:CommunityHealthCompliance@uvahealth.org)
- Confidential Compliance Helpline: 1.877.888.4806 (may report anonymously)
- Anonymous Mobile Reporting: [UVACommunityHealthMobile.ethicspoint.com](http://UVACommunityHealthMobile.ethicspoint.com)
- Webform: Scan QR code

