



- Goal:** To help staff recognize the need for physical and informational privacy in all customer interactions.
- Objective:**
1. Improve awareness of patient satisfaction regarding privacy.
  2. Create awareness of HIPAA regulations.
  3. Help staff identify areas where breach of physical privacy may occur in your department and actions to prevent it.
  4. Help staff identify areas where breach of informational privacy may occur both in and outside of your department and actions to prevent it.
- Materials:** Copy of your patient satisfaction survey to review privacy questions  
Handout (please make enough copies for your staff)
- Activity:**
1. Discuss why reviewing patient privacy information is so important. Take a look at the questions on your patient satisfaction survey results (Gallup, Press Ganey, NRC+Picker, etc.) regarding privacy and discuss how well you scored.
  2. Review HIPAA information regarding patient privacy. Discuss steps your department has in place to protect a patient's privacy.
  3. As a group, use the privacy worksheet to determine where breaches of physical and informational privacy might occur and your steps for prevention.
- Examples:** Walking a patient to the bathroom.  
Discussing a patient's insurance or billing information.
4. Supply a handout to all participants. Make sure employees who do not attend this session receive a copy of the handout and review the completed worksheet so they are aware of your department's privacy concerns and actions.

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## Patient Privacy: It's the Law

Every patient who comes to the hospital is guaranteed privacy and confidentiality by our Patient Bill of Rights.

The definition of privacy may be interpreted many ways. Some patients are especially sensitive to their physical privacy (wanting doors and drapes closed to protect them from another's view). Some patients are very concerned about informational privacy. They want to keep their name, address, social security number, and diagnosis from being brought to others attention.

Not only do patients hold us accountable for ensuring their privacy, but the Federal Government has increased its expectations as well.

The HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) rules are privacy regulations that outline how the healthcare industry and its business partners must protect patient data. The content of these rules is very lengthy and difficult, but two basic points that affect us include:

*Patients have a right to their health information, such as their medical records in our facility. Practices of not releasing a medical record to a patient until the record is complete will no longer be allowed.*

*Access to written patient information will be restricted to those who have a "need to know basis" and can only be released with the patient's specific consent.*

Other practices and processes to think about in light of HIPAA regulations include:

1. How patients sign in at a registration area. Do patients know who has been there before and after them?
2. Patient boards that may list confidential patient information.
3. Patient test results, charts, written orders, etc. left out or unattended.
4. How is computer information protected from unauthorized access? Do we leave a screen up with patient information?

**Privacy is every patient's right and our responsibility!**

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