Subject: Patient Confidentiality	Policy #: 4.1
Prepared by:	Revision #:
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4.1 Patient Confidentiality

Knowledge of any personal information (including, but not limited to family conditions, work status, income, or medical condition and treatments) for patients must be strictly on a need-to-know basis only. Employees and volunteers whose functions require a need-to-know certain patient personal information should avoid access to other personal information. In addition, every employee, volunteer, student, and contractor must sign a confidentiality agreement and comply with its terms.

As a minimum, employees and volunteers who have a need-to-know should follow the following procedures:

- Do not discuss patient personal information with others who do not have a need-to-know.

- Do not discuss patient personal information where the discussion may be overheard by others having no need-to-know.

- All permanent paper records containing patient personal information must be properly supervised at all times.

- All temporary paper records containing such information must be properly supervised at all time and must be shredded as soon as their purpose has been served.

- All electronic records containing patient personal information must have access limited only to those with a need-to-know.

Procedure:

All request for PHI received by GSHWC facility, ancillary services, or nursing staff, will be forwarded to the Medical Records department. No PHI will be released by anyone other than medical records employees/volunteers who are authorized to do so, except for those authorized to release information for emergency care of a patient.

Requests for patient information is received at the facility by US mail, facility email, walk-ins, or internal/external fax, and are sent to the HIM department to be processed.

Request turn-around time will be a maximum of 30 days, unless there is a problem that will require notifying the requestor as to a delay. Emergency requests such as ER or OR patient care needs, correctional facility treatment needs, or court request dates will supersede the normal schedule of processing by received date.

All requests must be accompanied by a verifiable authorization signed by the patient or the healthcare power of attorney, with proof of such documentation. Requests that cannot be verified as properly authorized will be returned to the requestor for further documentation/proof.

All requests for information will be reviewed and only the minimum necessary documentation needed to fulfill a request will be abstracted from the patient record and sent.

All requests will be returned to the requestor by the method they choose; email, fax, US mail, or personal pick-up. If no method is requested, Good Samaritan will fax all requests if possible.

Steps to Process ROI:

1. Daily check the ECW fax logs for incoming requests and to verify that the outgoing faxes from the previous workday were completed. If there were any faxes that failed to send, resend them immediately.

2. Daily check the external fax and the office mailbox for incoming requests. Scan all new request information into the ROI work log and the ECW individual patient documents.

3. Carefully read request and verify that all authorizations and specific information is documented. If not, send a denial letter explaining why request cannot be fulfilled.

4. If the request is for a GSHWC patient, select the specified pieces of chart documentation required. Print and rescan as a separate file under ROI tab, gather all docs needed and pull together in a ROI pdf file and send to ROI pdfs file on desktop. Retrieve the individual pdf needed and add to local with description of what ROI is being sent. Once all docs are in one file under ROI, click on that file and fax to requestor.

5. Use cover letter (form) to address fax to proper requestor, fill in the billing information and attach to the document file to fax.

6. Once the request has been completed and faxed, go to the ROI work log and update the completion information.

7. At end of work day, check the fax outbox to make sure that all of the faxes have been completed. If any failed, go back and resend them.

At end of workday, put all scanned paper documents in the destruction bins.