Unauthorized Access to Protected Health Information

As a workforce member of DPH, it’s everyone’s job to protect our patient’s privacy. Only access patients’ protected health information (PHI) as necessary to perform your job responsibilities as defined by your job role. Beware of your actions to reduce the risk of privacy violations.

STOP, THINK, PROTECT!

Audits of access are conducted regularly on the Lifetime Clinical Record (LCR). If you access records for non-business purposes, corrective and disciplinary actions may include loss of privileges, impact to your professional license and can lead to Separation!

The reason for the pop-up screens (below) when logging on your computer systems is to inform you that:

- DPH computer systems are solely for city business
  - Using the computer system for personal reasons is a misuse of city resources
- Furthermore, the LCR log on screen states “Important HIPAA Notice: Patient health information is confidential”.
  - Authorized users may access individual patient information only for valid healthcare delivery or operational reasons.
  - All Access to patient information is logged and subject to audit.

Things you need to know...
Failure to comply with HIPAA and state requirements can result in civil and criminal penalties. These penalties can apply to both covered entities and individuals.

- Fines and penalties applies to individuals and institutions up to $250,000
- Violations may impact your professional license
- DPH disciplinary actions, may include termination of employment

Report a Privacy Breach:

- Report every potential breach of protected health information
  - Privacy & Compliance Hotline: (855) 729-6040
  - Email: Compliance.Privacy@sfdph.org
  - Refer to Policy B1.1 Reporting of Unlawful or Unauthorized Access to PHI

The Privacy Office also provides consultation on all privacy related questions. Please feel free to contact us.