



San Francisco
Department of Public Health

PRIVACY PULSE

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY REMINDERS

Privacy Best Practices When Giving Patients Protected Health Information (PHI) Documents

“May I confirm I have the right person? Will you please confirm your name and date of birth?”

Department of Public Health (DPH) has recently experienced several privacy breaches due to staff giving documents that include protected health information (PHI) to the wrong patient or client. These documents include lab orders, procedure reports, and After Visit Summaries (AVS). Please take precaution before giving documents to your patients or clients.



Before handing them the PHI documents:

- ✓ Double check the documents and ensure you take only the patient information that pertains to the person when removing the documents from the printer.
- ✓ Check all pages of the documents to ensure that the information relates to the patient that you are giving it to and all pages are printed correctly.
- ✓ Ask the patient to confirm their name and date of birth to verify that you have the right match **before** you give them the documents with PHI.

Scenario:

A patient called the clinic and stated she was given another patient's After Visit Summary (AVS) during her appointment a week ago.

Is this a Privacy Violation? YES!!

What to do next? If you accidentally provide the wrong PHI documents to the patient:

- ✓ Request that the documents be returned to your clinic.
- ✓ Ask the patient for the Name and MRN# on the document(s) that they received in error.
 - Record the name and MRN of the patient whose PHI was exposed.
- ✓ Immediately notify your supervisor and the Privacy Office of the incident.

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW....

Even if you or your staff inadvertently give documents with PHI to the wrong patient, this is a **Breach of HIPAA privacy** -- **Notify** the Privacy Office as soon as the error is discovered.

DPH is committed to maintaining the privacy of our patients and take possible privacy breaches seriously. If you or any staff member have questions about handling documents with PHI or would like to report a privacy incident, please contact your Privacy Officer or the Privacy Office via hotline.

Report a Privacy Breach:



Report every potential Breach of Protected Health Information (PHI):

- **Compliance, Privacy & Ethics Hotline: (855) 729-6040**
- **Email: compliance.privacy@sfdph.org**
- **Refer to [Breach Notification Policy](#)**

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