DPH Business Ethics and Best Practices
All Staff Memo
July 26, 2016

Pokémon GO... NOT!!

You may have heard of the popular mobile phone app that has taken the world by storm. It poses risks for patient privacy by leading players into patient care areas where they may inadvertently take photos of patients or sensitive data and post it on social media.

These are serious violations of privacy that come with hefty fines.

What is Pokémon GO, you ask? It is a new mobile app which requires users to roam about and physically seek out digital monsters. The game encourages users to explore their neighborhoods and surroundings, and uses real world landmarks to catch, train, battle and nurture these digital monsters. The game itself uses smart phone clocks and GPS features to make Pokémon appear based on a player’s cell phone location.

Health Care facilities and hospitals across the nation and in other countries are on high alert as Pokémon has appeared in emergency rooms and other sensitive patient care areas causing security, safety and privacy concerns for patients and clients.

Please follow these rules:

1. Do not play this game while you are on a DPH site.
2. Do not take pictures of patients/clients/residents or any part of the DPH site and upload them to any social media sites without prior authorization*.
3. Remain vigilant and direct members of the public (Pokémon players) to not play the game in DPH sites.

*As a Reminder – Go here to review the policy restricting photographing, videotaping and audio recording by patients, clients, residents, visitors and staff while inside SFDPH clinical facilities.

Man finds Pokémon on wife's hospital bed while she’s giving birth. Source: Jonathan Theriot via Buzzfeed