POLICY ON PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY

Department of Family Medicine
University of Alberta

PURPOSE: Ethical, regulatory and statutory standards require that all health care providers maintain confidentiality of patient information. Breach of patient confidentiality is taken very seriously by Alberta Health Services, the University of Alberta, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Alberta, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta, and the Courts of Law.

SCOPE: This policy pertains to all Family Medicine Residents in the Department of Family Medicine Residency Programs.

Patient Health Information

1. Regard the confidentiality of patients and their personal health information as a primary obligation.
2. Assure patient confidentiality by limiting discussion of patient health issues to appropriate settings and caregivers, and those identified by patient consent.
3. Do not access the records of any person not under your care. Looking at records of a friend, relative, or yourself is strictly prohibited.
4. Log off of NetCare, your site specific EMR or other sources of medical information when your session is finished at any location.
5. Identify patients by non-nominal data if collecting information for procedural log books, direct feedback or documented observations.
6. Ensure that any printed information (results, patient lists) is disposed of appropriately (shredded).
7. No health information may be removed from hospital sites, clinics, or other health facility.
8. Personal health information from AHS systems cannot be stored on any non-AHS device.
9. Personal health information must not be downloaded to laptops, memory sticks, or other portable devices. Email messages that contain patient information must be de-identified or sent through a secure portal. If downloading to portable devices is essential to the performance of a business or clinical function, approval must be provided by IT Security & Compliance. They may be contacted at itsecurity@albertahealthservices.ca.