

GHVA Volunteer Privacy Orientation



Privacy, Confidentiality and Security of Personal Health Information

- Hospitals must have procedures in place to protect patient privacy and confidentiality of personal health information (PHI) regardless of the form.
- All volunteers who have the right to access PHI in the course of their work, have an ethical and professional obligation to protect the confidentiality of the information and to access and use only as required for their duties.
- Volunteers are expected to implement good security practices consistent with the value of the information.
- Privacy is a right that must be protected by law and gives an individual control on how their PHI is handled and shared-including when, how and with whom.
- Confidentiality is a hospital's obligation to ensure the privacy by limiting access and disclosure.



Three Core Questions

1. Do I have to know this information to perform my duties?

Privacy

Access hospital information only when it directly relates to your volunteer responsibilities and is necessary to perform your duties.

2. Do I have to share this information to do perform my duties?

Confidentiality

Share hospital information with individuals only when it is necessary to perform your duties.

3. Does anyone else have access to information, which is not necessary to do perform their duties?

Security

Keep hospital information secure and actively protect information from unauthorized examination or casual observation.

“Hospital information” includes any information you learned while at the hospital, either verbal or written, paper or electronic.

Protection of PHI is Part of the Hospital's Culture

- ❑ All Volunteers must demonstrate an understanding of confidentiality policies
- ❑ All Volunteers must demonstrate an understanding of patient's right to privacy.
- ❑ Every Volunteer has a duty to report violations and failure to do so is a breach
- ❑ Volunteers must demonstrate and be respectful of areas where hospital staff may be discussing patient information and wait to enter when it is appropriate to do so –e.g. nursing stations, and patient rooms.



GHVA Pledge of Confidentiality

Volunteers play an important role in patient care at Groves Memorial Community Hospital. Even if you are not providing direct patient care, you will see and hear confidential information about patients and clients of the hospital. It is important for you to know that any information about patients or clients is private – that means that it must NOT be shared with others without consent of the individual. Even the fact that someone is in hospital is a confidential piece of information – do not share this with anyone else, including your family. Breach of confidentiality is grounds for immediate dismissal and/or legal action.

- Remember that a patient's name is confidential-speak softly and be aware of your surroundings.
- Share information only on a need-to-know basis, and only with those people directly involved in the care of a patient.
- Never ask a patient why they are in the hospital

What is personal health information?

- Identifying information about an individual which includes:
 - ✓ **The fact the patient is a patient in the hospital**
 - ✓ **Physical or mental condition**
 - ✓ **Payment of eligibility for healthcare**
 - ✓ **individual's healthcare number**
 - ✓ **Anything that identifies an individuals' substitute decision maker**



Responding effectively to enquires

The following information may be provided to visitors **by Volunteers who greet and monitor Hospital information desk:**

- ✓ When requested , the location of the in patient in the hospital from hospital provided patient list.
- ✓ The patient has a right to request complete confidentiality. In some cases the above information is not provided at all in order to protect the safety of the patient (e.g. patients of domestic violence or sexual assault).

Privacy Breaches



A privacy breach occurs when you are sharing or accessing personal health information that is not required to do your work.

Examples include:

- The unauthorized sharing of PHI for patients outside of volunteer duties
- Reading patient information that may be available in patient care areas.
- Intentionally listening to medical staff discuss a patient.

Breaches will be investigated and depending on the nature, occurrence and severity may result in disciplinary action.

The Law requires that breaches are reported.

Consequences of a Privacy Breach

People who commit a privacy breach face one or more of the following:

- Disciplinary action
- Firing or loss of privileges
- Substantial financial penalties (\$5,000 to over \$50,000)
- Criminal conviction



Know your responsibilities



- Ensure all patient info remains in the hospital – includes written and verbal information learned or in possession while performing duties.
- If asked to complete a task that is not on your assigned list, contact your coordinator or manager before completing – if manager/coordinator is not immediately available politely refuse request and advise you are not comfortable performing task without manager approval.
- Avoid speaking about private information in a public area.
- If exposed to patient information while scheduled in patient care areas do not read or intentionally listen– a patient’s health information or care details is private and should be kept within the ‘circle of care’.
- Transportation of information around the hospital without utilizing envelopes MUST be avoided – if your volunteer duties involve pick up and transfer of information between departments it must be in a secured envelope - refuse transfer of information that is not secured properly.

What do I do?



You are out with some friends at a social function and someone says they heard that their neighbor was in the hospital and they ask you if you saw this person at the hospital when you were performing your volunteer duties. How should you respond?

- A. Confirm that you saw him/her when you were last in but you are unsure what for.
- B. Remind your friends that patient information including whether or not someone is a patient at the hospital is confidential information and you cannot discuss.

Correct Answer

B. Remind your friends that patient information including whether or not someone is a patient at the hospital is confidential information and you cannot discuss.



Remember as a Volunteer with the GHVA, we have a shared responsibility to protect patient health information.

What do I do?



- Q. You have finished your volunteer shift however you did not quite complete contacting the entire list of people you were given to remind about their appointments tomorrow. What do I do?
- A. Since there are just a couple and I am in a bit of a hurry I just take the list home and make a couple of calls from home so that people don't forget about their appointment.
- Or
- B. Advise the staff liaison that my shift is over and advise of who on the list still needs to be contacted.

Correct Answer

- B. Advise the staff liaison that my shift is over and advise of who on the list still needs to be contacted.

Never under any circumstances should patient information be removed from the hospital. If you are unable to complete all assigned tasks during your shift advise the staff liaison prior to leaving who will ensure task is reassigned appropriately to next volunteer or staff as applicable.



What do I do?



While performing duties at the hospital I approach the nursing station to ask a question and the medical staff is having a conversation about a patient. I need to clarify something with a staff member before performing the task so I.....

A. Aware that patient health information is private and confidential, I choose to busy myself with another task until there is a more appropriate time to approach the staff member for clarification.

OR

B. Just wait close by listening so that I can jump in with my question when they are finished so I can complete my task.

Correct Answer

- A. Aware that patient health information is private and confidential, I choose to busy myself with another task until there is a more appropriate time to approach the staff member for clarification.

Volunteers do not require patient health information to perform assigned tasks and therefore should never intentionally listen to conversations about patients or read patient information that may be available in patient care areas of the hospital. If task clarification is required by a staff member kindly respect that medical staffs #1 priority are their patients and wait to approach when the situation warrants.



Resources

- Chief Privacy Officer – Dan Coghlan
- Manager of Health Information & Decision Support – Wilma Kassian
- PHIPA/Privacy Commission Ontario <https://www.ipc.on.ca>
- Volunteer Handbook

THANK YOU FOR PROTECTING OUR PATIENTS RIGHTS