

How is confidentiality most often violated?

- Client-related information is left exposed where visitors or unauthorized individuals can see it.
- Client information is discussed in a public place or with inappropriate, unauthorized individuals.
- Unauthorized people hear client-sensitive information.
- Client records are accessed for the wrong reasons or by inappropriate individuals.

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Community Caregivers, Inc.



Notice of Privacy Practices:

HIPAA Regulations

Enclosed you will find answers to:

- What is HIPAA?
- How does HIPAA protect client rights?
- What information does HIPAA cover?
- What are client rights and confidentiality?
- What are volunteers required to do?
- How can volunteers make a difference?
- How is client confidentiality violated?

What is HIPAA?

HIPAA is the **H**Health **I**nsurance **P**ortability and **A**ccountability **A**ct of 1996.

Congress passed the law to standardize medical record information and reduce the administrative costs of health care providers and other related businesses, including those like Community Caregivers. It also outlines procedures for protecting clients' privacy rights.

What information does HIPAA cover?

The privacy law covers **ALL** communications regarding patients, written, electronic, oral, and **ANY** other.

That means that Community Caregivers volunteers need to be mindful of all information that is written, computerized, transmitted, faxed, mailed, and spoken.

What are client rights and confidentiality?

Rights: A person's right to control their protected health information is based on their right to control the health care itself.

Confidentiality: The services that CC volunteers perform for clients are not anyone else's business.

How does HIPAA protect client rights?

- **It creates national standards** to protect individuals' medical records and other personal health information.
- **It sets boundaries** on the use and release of health records and information.
- **It standardizes codes** used to send client health information.
- **It establishes civil penalties** that hold violators accountable.

What are volunteers required to do?

- **Awareness:** Ask the CC staff to explain any HIPAA privacy procedures that are unclear.
- **Security:** Keep all client records and information containing personally identifiable health information (PHI) confidential.

How can volunteers make a difference?

- By protecting and ensuring clients' rights. Respect the individual and his or her right to privacy.

- By limiting access to clients' health information.
- By disclosing information only to those who are rightfully entitled and those with a need to know so they can carry out their volunteer duties.

What else can volunteers do to help?

- If you have to discuss a client's condition (with appropriate individuals) in public areas, speak quietly..
- Avoid using clients' names in hallways, offices and other public areas.
- If you must discuss a client's confidential information, note when the information was requested and to whom it was disclosed.
- Should you need to fax client information, verify all fax numbers first. Always use a fax cover sheet stating that the information is confidential.
- Take precautions to prevent inadvertent disclosures.
- Review the way you handle confidential client information to ensure that you're following these guidelines.

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