Protecting Patient Privacy: Your Responsibilities

1. Protecting Patient Privacy: Your Responsibilities

1.1 Protecting Patient Privacy: Your Responsibilities

Notes:

Welcome! This training is on best practices for accessing medical records and posting to social media. While all Healthcare systems are held to a high standard when it comes to Protected Health Information (PHI), at Trinity Health, our mission, vision, and values holds us to an even higher standard by stating, "We will be your most trusted health partner for life." All Trinity Health colleagues have an important role to play every day when it comes to maintaining patient trust and respecting privacy.

### 1.2 Course Navigation - DID YOU KNOW?

Notes:

Before we begin, let's review the tools you can use throughout this training. To advance or go back in the course use the previous and next buttons located in the bottom right. Or use the course menu located in the panel on the left.
This course includes both audio and video. Closed captioning is on by default in the videos. The audio narration transcript is visible in the left panel.
Lastly, when you see DI**D YOU KNOW?,** select it to reveal additional important information. Try it now!

DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)
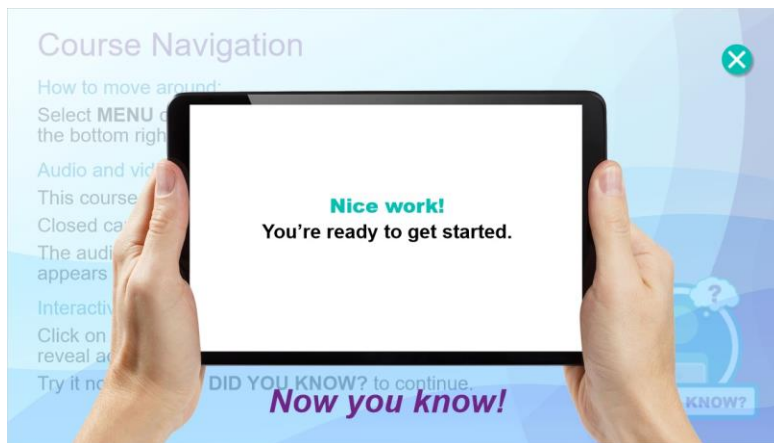

1.3 Course Objectives

Notes:

After completing this training, you'll understand your role in safeguarding PHI.

In addition, this course will help you assess situations before accessing medical records or posting to social media by determining whether or not the action is a part of your job. In other words, care before you share.

And avoid potential consequences. Good colleagues have been terminated simply because they posted inappropriate content on social media or were curious and accessed a patient medical record for non-business reasons.

1.4 Watch: Protectors of Patient Privacy
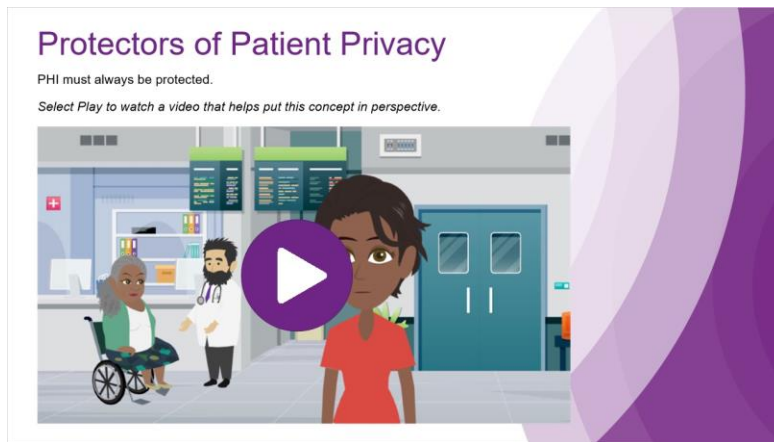
Notes:

PHI must always be protected. Select Play to watch a video that helps put this concept in perspective.

Video Transcript
When our patients arrive at one of our facilities, it can be an overwhelming experience. All Trinity Health colleagues must play their part in building and maintaining trust with anyone who walks through our doors.

Let's compare this to a traveler arriving at an airport. Like our patients, a traveler's journey may be planned or unexpected, they may feel excited or nervous, and they may have many questions.

Now, imagine their luggage as a gold suitcase containing precious, personal items. What's inside the suitcase doesn't matter. It belongs to the traveler, it's personal and private, and they expect anyone who handles it to protect the contents and handle it with care.

This suitcase is like a patient's protected health information. It will be handled by many trusted individuals and will move throughout a large system without fear of getting lost, damaged, or stolen.

There are times when airport personnel must open the suitcase; just like when our colleagues must access protected health information or patient medical records. When this happens, our patients should be able to trust that we'll care for their personal health information.

When a suitcase gets lost or stolen, it can be a very stressful situation for the traveler, and it erodes trust in the airport itself. Airport security may investigate the situation and may need to repair or replace personal items as needed.

Compare this to the instances in which health information policies are breached. If a breach happens, the Trinity Health Privacy Team will take similar action and investigate. If this happens, we risk losing patient trust and will fall short of our mission, vision, and values.

Video (Slide Layer)

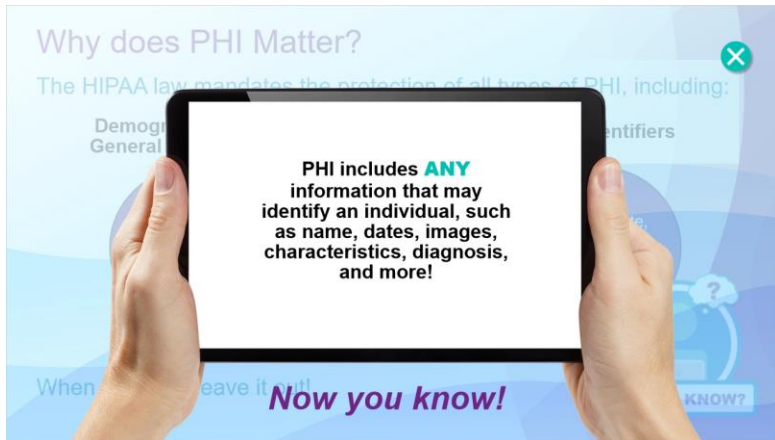## 1.5 Why does PHI Matter? - DID YOU KNOW?

Notes:

The HIPAA law mandates the protection of PHI, but what does this mean exactly?

- To begin with, demographics and general information include name, age, address, location, race, ethnicity, photos, and more.
- Next, medical information includes diagnosis, treatment, length of stay, etc.
- And finally, be aware that patients may have unique identifiers, which can include license plate numbers, tattoos, high-profile media details, and more.

The bottom line is that sharing information may be common in many settings, but it simply can't occur in a healthcare setting. It's the responsibility of every Trinity Health colleague to protect this information. If you are unsure about what qualifies as protected health information, ask your manager for guidance. When in doubt, leave it out.

Click **DID YOU KNOW?** now to continue.

DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)

1.6 Key Takeaways

Notes:

Take a moment to review the key takeaways from this section.
When ready, click **DID YOU KNOW?** to continue.

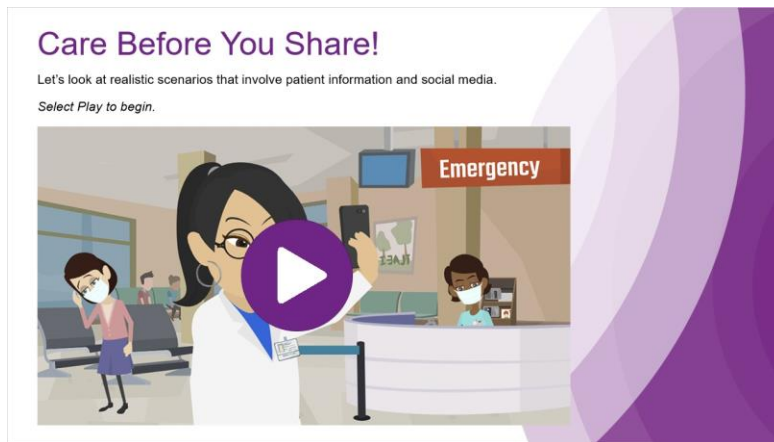**DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)**

1.7 Privacy and Social Media

Notes:

Now that you understand how important it is that we take special care of patient information, let's talk more specifically about best practices for when to share and not share information on social media.

1.8 Watch: Care Before You Share! - DID YOU KNOW?

Notes:

Let's look at realistic scenarios that involve patient information and social media. Select Play to begin.

Video Transcript

Because using social media has become so commonplace, situations arise which may be appropriate in your personal life, but not at work. Let's consider some important do's and don'ts.

If a patient shares a friend request or attempts to connect with you on social media, what should you do?

Trinity Health colleagues should never connect with a patient on social media or accept a friend request from a patient. We provide the most personal of human services, body, mind, and spirit. We need to maintain our patients' trust and comply with HIPAA regulations. We are not permitted to comment on clinical care issues or acknowledge our treatment relationships with patients on our personal social media.

If a patient tags you in a photo or social media post, what should you do?

Do not like, comment, or share anything posted by a patient on social media, even if they directly tagged you in the post. Instead, simply ignore the post, and remove the tag. In addition, at your next care interaction, explain about HIPAA regulations, if the patient brings up the post. Is it acceptable to share general information about a situation or medical facility on social media, as long as you do not include any individual patient information or PHI?

Colleagues should never post anything about our Health Ministry operations or patients to their personal social media. Not only does this erode patient trust and violate Trinity and HIPAA standards, it may also lead to legal action and/or termination. Never reference our patients or Ministry operations on your personal social media.

In this example, a colleague livestreams their workday. They're very careful not to capture any protected health information in their videos.
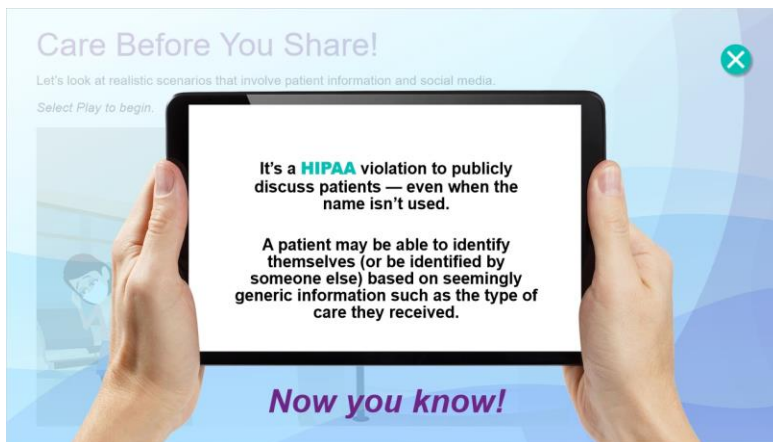
Unfortunately, no matter how careful you are, it's human nature to make a mistake. Furthermore, you should never put yourself in a position where you may lose our patients' trust or violate the law. Therefore, it is never appropriate to take photos or livestream for your personal social media content.

We only discuss patients and their care for purposes related to treatment, business operations, or quality of care. The bottom line is it is never acceptable to livestream to your personal social media in any care or office areas.

Video (Slide Layer)

DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)

1.9 Key Takeaways - DID YOU KNOW?

Notes:

Take a moment to review the key takeaways from this section.
Then, click **DID YOU KNOW?** to continue.

DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)
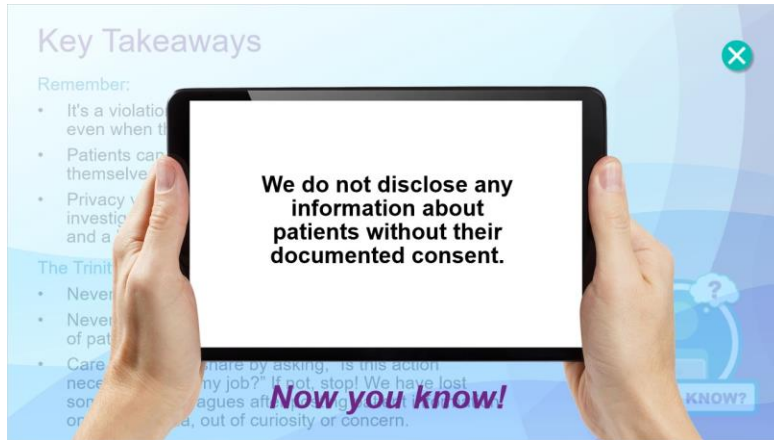
1.10 Privacy and Medical Records

Notes:

In this last section, we'll discuss the importance of privacy regarding accessing medical records.

1.11 The Trinity Health Standard - DID YOU KNOW?

Notes:

At Trinity Health, we protect patient privacy by:

Using a robust medical record access monitoring program.

Taking patient concerns seriously and investigating any issues they report.

Providing ongoing training for all colleagues on this topic and others.

And relying on our colleagues to understand their role, do the right thing, and promptly report any concerns.

Click **DID YOU KNOW?** now to continue.

DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)

1.12 Watch: Accessing Patient Medical Records
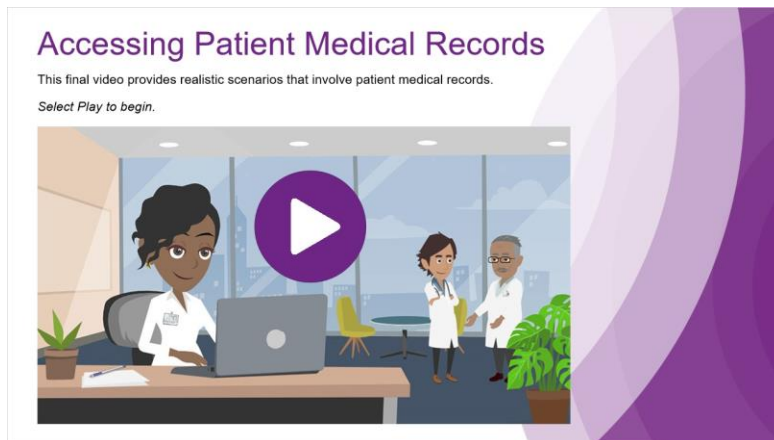
Notes:

This final video provides realistic scenarios that involve patient medical records. Select Play to begin.

Video Transcript
It's common for Trinity Health colleagues' friends and family members to be patients within our health network.

Message: Hey favorite sister of mine! Can you see how much I owe from my appointment last week?

Associate: I wish I could help, but I'm not allowed to access your medical information.

Message: I get it, but I'm really confused and don't know how to find it. Can you please look it up just this once?

While it may feel like you're helping when you answer a quick question for a loved one or friend, accessing their medical information is a clear violation of our standards and our patients' trust. The best way you can help is to educate them on how the patient can access the information they need themselves.

Associate: You can see your payments in MyChart, or you could call your doctor's billing department. Let me know if you need me to send you the phone number or the link to the MyChart sign up page.
By directing them to the appropriate office or MyChart, you're giving them additional resources they can use in the future.
Let's look at this from a different perspective. What if instead of accessing someone else's medical information, you want to look up your own medical information?

Like your family and friends, you as a Trinity Health colleague, should only use the MyChart patient portal to view your own information. It is never appropriate to access Trinity Health's patient information for personal use.
In this scenario, a fellow colleague was recently admitted to the Labor and Delivery unit in a Trinity Health facility.
Associate 1: Does anyone know if Ingrid delivered her baby?
Associate 2: I was wondering the same thing! I'll look her up on the computer.
Is this a violation of our Trinity Health standards?
Remember, it's inappropriate to access Trinity Health's patient information for personal

use of any kind. All patients are entitled to the same level of privacy, including patients who are colleagues. It is never appropriate to search for colleagues in the medical records system for any reason. If they want to share information or have visitors, they will contact you.

In this final scenario, let's consider rare instances in which there is a well-known patient or another situation that may interest colleagues and the community.

Associate: I can't wait to look her up when I am done with lunch.

Is it acceptable for this colleague to look up information about this local celebrity out of curiosity?

We understand that Trinity Health colleagues may be curious in certain situations. However, it is never acceptable to access patient information, or verbally discuss patients unless it is for a clear business reason.

Video (Slide Layer)

1.13 Monitoring and Consequences - DID YOU KNOW?

Notes:

Trinity Health has dedicated colleagues who monitor access to medical records and PHI to avoid potential consequences. We do this to:
protect patient privacy,
honor our mission, vision, and values,
maintain the integrity of the medical record, and
uphold the HIPAA Regulations.
Violations may result in various consequences, such as written notification to the patient and further investigation,
notification to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,
And in some cases, termination of employment.
Select **DID YOU KNOW?** to learn more.
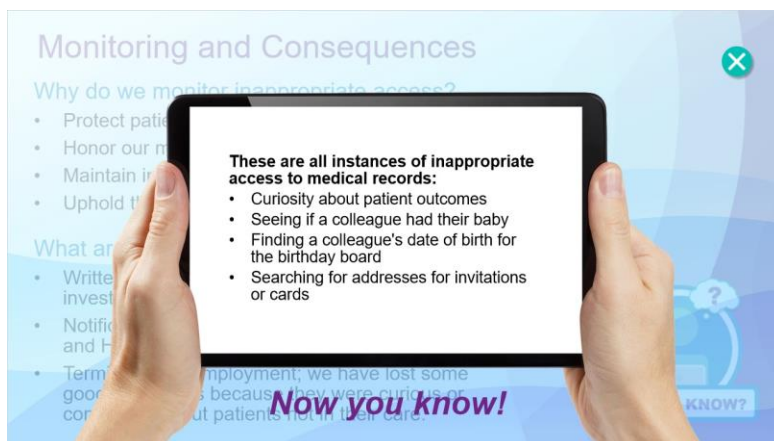
DidYouKnow (Slide Layer)

1.14 Key Takeaways

Notes:

Take a moment to review the key takeaways from this section. Then, select 'Next' to continue.

1.15 We Appreciate You!

Notes:

When every Trinity Health colleague ensures patient information is handled in a safe and secure fashion, we can say, with confidence, to our patients that we'll be their most trusted health partner for life. We appreciate your hard work in making this happen!

1.16 Agreement

Notes:

By finishing this course, you now know your responsibility in protecting patient privacy. Please read the statements provided and select "I agree" to complete this course.
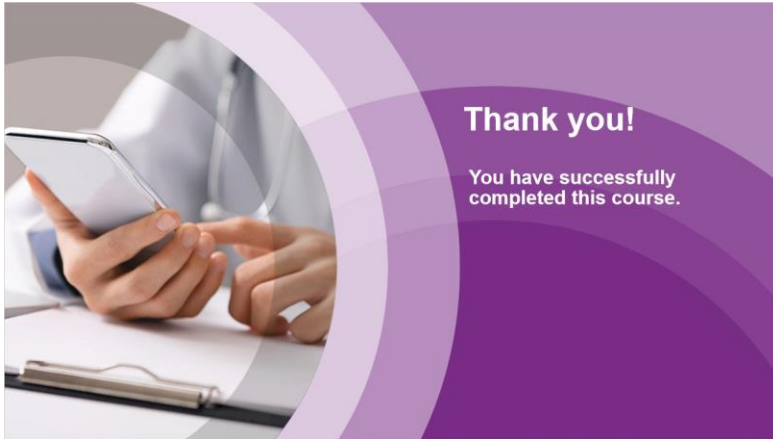
Finish (Slide Layer)

1.17 Thank you!

Notes: