

Tip Sheet: Sharing of Patient Information



Overview

Most of the privacy complaints filed by patients involve clinical/business staff sharing patient information with the patient’s family or friends without the patient’s authorization. Keep the following points in mind before you share patient information with a patient’s family and friends.

Sharing of Patient Information

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|  | **In Person** | **Over the Phone** |
| As a best practice, ask family, friends, and visitors to leave the examination room/treatment area before discussing any information with the patient. | a |  |
| Verify with the patient that it is okay to share information with the patient’s family/friends (who may have accompanied them to their appointment). Document the patient’s wishes. | a |  |
| Make sure the patient has no limitations (restrictions) in place around sharing of patient information (E.g., No Information patients). | a | a |
| Obtain patient authorization and follow [insert local ministry] procedures when providing patient information to family/friends/patient representative. | a | a |
| If at all possible, refer all callers directly to the patient or the patient’s representative or family spokesperson. |  | a |
| Know who serves as the patient’s representative, family spokesperson, or Power of Attorney for Health Care if applicable. Verify their identity and ask to see authorization documents. | a | a |
| Remember the fine line between your role as a Trinity Health colleague and your role as a family member, friend or co-worker. Trinity Health colleagues may NOT access the information of family members, friends, or co-workers out of care, curiosity or concern without authorization from the patient.\* | a | a |

*\*Unauthorized/inappropriate access to and/or disclosures of patient information may constitute a privacy and/or security breach and result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.*