



Submission ID:  
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### USF Health Care

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<b>Internal Guideline and Procedure Name:</b>	HIPAA Privacy in Emergency Situations		
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Privacy and Healthcare Civil Rights Compliance Program (PHCR)		
<b>Submitted By:</b>	Barbara Wolodzko	<b>Title:</b>	Privacy Officer

Review/Approvals:	Committee Name and/or CEO Name:	Date Approved:
<b>Oversight Committee</b> <i>(if applicable):</i>		
<b>Sr. Assoc. Vice President, USF Health Chief Operating Officer, USF Health CEO, UMSA</b>	Renee Dubault	
<b>USFHC Finance, EMC or CLB</b> <i>(if applicable):</i>		

**OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES**

To provide for uses and disclosures of patient protected health information (PHI) as necessary to treat a patient, to protect public health, and for other critical purposes during an emergency, as permitted under the HIPAA Privacy Rule. See 45 CFR §164.512.

**STATEMENT OF INTERNAL GUIDELINES**

In an emergency situation, USF Health continues to implement reasonable safeguards to protect PHI against intentional or unintentional impermissible uses and disclosures. USF Health follows guidance and directives under the USF emergency operations plan along with any additional directives provided by USF leadership, management, law enforcement or public safety officials.

Disclosures to Family, Friends, and Others Involved in an Individual’s Care and For Notification: USF Health may share PHI with a patient’s family members, relatives, friends, or other persons identified by the patient as involved in the patient’s care.

USF Health may also share information about a patient, as necessary, to identify, locate, and notify family members, guardians, or anyone else responsible for the patient’s care, of the patient’s location, general condition, or death. This disclosure may include notifying family members and others, the police, the press, or the public at large. See 45 CFR § 164.510(b).

USF Health shall obtain a patient’s verbal permission for disclosure when possible. However, if the patient is incapacitated or unable to respond, USF Health may share information if, based on a USF provider’s professional judgment, doing so is in the patient’s best interest. Professional judgment will be the standard unless a lesser professional standard such as a “good faith belief” is required under current law.

USF Health may also share PHI with disaster relief organizations, such as the American Red Cross, if authorized by law or by their charters to assist in disaster relief efforts for the purpose of coordinating notification efforts.

USF Health is not required under HIPAA to obtain a patient's permission to share this information if doing so would interfere in USF Health's ability to respond to the emergency.

**Public Health Activities:** USF Health is authorized to report to public health authorities, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or a state or local health department that is authorized by law to collect or receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease, injury or disability.

**Imminent Danger:** In cases of imminent danger, USF Health may share patient information with anyone, as necessary, to prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to the health and safety of a person or the public, as consistent with applicable law (such as state statutes, regulations, or case law) and standards of ethical conduct. See 45 CFR 164.512(j).

**RESPONSIBLE OFFICE** - The preceding was developed by the Privacy Officer, USF Privacy and Healthcare Civil Rights Compliance Program (PHCR). Any questions or concerns should be directed to the PHCR at [privacy@usf.edu](mailto:privacy@usf.edu) or (813) 974-2222.

Prior approval: Revised for name change and contact updates 02/27/24, COO 07/12/16, AVP 07/06/16, and the USF Health PSAC 03/17/15.