

HIPAA Hints

What Does a Privacy Bin Have to Do with Comfort?

By Bill Dobbins, HIPAA Auditor & Educator

Mrs. Harley is a UAMS employee as well as a patient. She works for clinical housekeeping. One day, Mrs. Harley was cleaning the clinic where she was recently seen and noticed that the clinic's shredding bin was unlocked and overflowing with PHI. Mrs. Harley was bothered by this as her own information may have been exposed in the open container. Mrs. Harley called the HIPAA office to notify the staff about the open shredding bin. She also made her next appointment with an outside provider instead of the clinic where she had previously been seen.

Protecting privacy and confidentiality at UAMS takes a great deal of teamwork. By always disposing of patient information in locked shredding bins, locking open shredding bins, and notifying the HIPAA Office of shredding bins without locks, you help create comfort for ANY patient who counts on us to keep their health information private. In Mrs. Harley's case, she was uncomfortable about the potential for exposure, and therefore less likely to use our facilities even though she is a member of the UAMS family.

The UAMS HIPAA Office reminds all employees that shredding bins used for the disposal of protected health information or designated as recycling containers must be locked at all times. No one other than the HIPAA Office is authorized to open a shredding bin.

Bin to remain locked at all times.

For unlock assistance or questions please call the UAMS HIPAA Office at 603.1379

Only Shred Smart employees who service the campus are allowed to un-

lock shredding bins for the purpose of emptying them. They are not allowed to provide keys to departments or allow temporary access.

Please call the HIPAA Office if you ever encounter

an unlocked or open shredding bin or if you have accidentally disposed of something and need the container opened. For your convenience, a sticker has been affixed to each shredding bin on campus with a helpful number to report unlocked bins or to request permission to access the container.

Have an idea for a HIPAA news item or need further information? Contact the UAMS HIPAA Office at 603-1379 or by e-mail: hipaa@uams.edu.

Our Patients tell us that Privacy is Important to Them!

By Ashley Vestal

As a part of preparations for Circle of Excellence, UAMS conducted a survey to find out more about what our patients value during their visits to UAMS. Of the respondents, 99.2% of patients strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, **"It is important to me that members of my health team respect my privacy when I am at the hospital or clinic."**

This was one of the highest ranked responses of the entire survey! A total of 84% of our patients also strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, **"It is important to me that members of my health team communicate quietly with one another."**

Some general guidelines for communicating patient information include:

Get in the habit of always lowering your voice when discussing patient information. That way it becomes second nature to you and not something you have to remember to do each time such as when giving report, making rounds, providing patient instructions at check-out in the clinic, obtaining registration information and discussing patients at the nursing station.

Try to discuss patient information privately. When possible, call patients individually to the check out area and stop the conversation if someone walks up while you are giving report or making rounds. Take patients to a private area to discuss information that may be especially sensitive.

OH&S Update

Watch Your Weight!

By Carol J. Price, M.S. – Director
Occupational Health and Safety

Back and shoulder injuries can occur with many different tasks. Correct disposal of regulated medical waste is a very important process for any medical facility.

The weight of a red-bag or sharps container matters! The red bag is designed to hold dry solid materials. It is very important not to over-fill these bags.

Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) asks that you limit the weight of these bags to no more than 35 pounds.

If you are not sure what 35 pounds feels like, then follow this rule: If you can lift it comfortably to waist high, the Biohazard staff of OH&S should have no problems.

In the future, bags that are heavy or extremely heavy will not be picked up for processing until the weight is redistributed into at least two containers.

Please remember to be conscientious of your co-workers!

ACORN Corner

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Thankfully, I feel like my preceptor did a great job of easing me into my new role during the transition from student to professional nurse. And now that I've been on my own for a few months, there are a couple of things that I feel are important in a successful transition.

First, find an experienced nurse that is willing to teach and answer questions. They will become an invaluable resource.

Secondly, never be afraid to follow your instincts. I've found that most of the time, had I just followed my gut, it would have been the right move.

And lastly, spend time with other new nurses. It's always nice to be able to talk to other people that can relate to your experience. Before you know it, you'll be more comfortable in your new role, and you'll be the one answering questions for new nurses.

CALLING ALL NURSES: New Position Offered!

Applications are now being accepted for the Pain Resource Nurse position.

Pain Management has always been a challenge to healthcare professionals, and now you may be able to help educate yourself and your peers to impact the management of pain on your units.

If you can answer "YES" to these simple questions, you could apply to become a Pain Resource Nurse.

1. Are you an RN III?
2. Is your personnel file free of disciplinary actions?
3. Do you have the time to devote to learning about and teaching others about Pain topics?
4. Have you discussed becoming a Pain Resource Nurse with your CSM?

If you are interested in this opportunity, go to www.uams.edu/nursingmanual, and look under "Resource Nurse New Application" and read about this program.

The deadline for completed applications is Monday December 21, 2008. For more information, please contact Rowena Garcia, RN, MBA - CSM at: GarciaRowenaM@uams.edu.

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Be aware of information on your computer screen. Position your monitor or Computer on Wheels (COW) so the screen cannot easily be seen by passersby. Minimize the screen if someone walks up to you during report or while you are reviewing patient information.

In addition to protecting our patient's information, these small steps on our part also convey a sense of respect for our patients and the feeling that their privacy is important to us and that we can be trusted to maintain it.