

## **CHAPTER 44**

### **Facsimile (FAX) Transmission of Health Information**

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#### **I. POLICY**

Health Record Services (HRS) shall ensure that quality controls have been established and implemented to ensure ready availability, retention, protection, and safeguarding of patient identifiable information. HRS staff shall electronically transmit patient health-related information only in limited situations where the information can not be hand or mail delivered in time to meet requirements. HRS shall not electronically transmit specific kinds of sensitive data including results of HIV testing. The HRS Supervisor or designee shall authorize electronic transmission of patient identifiable information. HRS staff shall take special precautions when using a facsimile machine, as there are special security issues when transmitting patient health-related information.

Facsimile transmissions shall be legible for the legal life of the report. HRS staff shall ensure that access to the dedicated health record facsimile equipment is limited to authorized persons only. Transmittals, as much as possible, shall be sent to preprogrammed or previously authorized numbers, e.g., to the HRS staff at the other institutions.

#### **II. PROCEDURE**

- A. Designated HRS staff shall monitor the transmission of confidential information by locating the facsimile machine in a secure location free from unauthorized access.
- B. HRS shall establish facsimile transmission monitoring protocols for receipt or sending of data.
  1. Cover sheet shall be attached to all FAXED documents.
    - a. Statements shall appear on the cover sheet that transmittal is confidential, and the receiving party is prohibited from disclosing the transmitted information to unauthorized persons.
    - b. Statements shall appear on cover sheet that if transmitted information is received by other than the intended individual, the sender shall be immediately notified so that arrangements can be made to rectify the situation.
  2. Transmittal and post transmittal verification shall be:
    - a. Telephone verification.
    - b. Receipt form verification.
  3. A Telecopy log
    - a. Record all facsimile transactions in the Telecopy log:
    - b. Name, address and telephone number of sending/receiving entities.
    - c. FAX number.
    - d. Name of patient and CDC number.
    - e. Number of pages sent/received.
    - f. Date of transmittal.

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- g. Receipt received/requested.
- h. Dates of all related actions.
- i. Signatures.
- j. Note: Verify type of facsimile equipment as some FAX reports may fade in time. Make a copy to ensure legibility for legal life of the report, if necessary.
- 4. A system to identify misdirected FAX transmission and resolution.
  - a. Check internal logging of the FAX machine to obtain recipient's FAX number.
  - b. Telephone and FAX a request to the incorrect FAX number, and explain the misdirection.
  - c. Request destruction or return of all documents FAXED in error.
  - d. Record response on cover letter and in the Telecopy log.
  - e. Complete an incident report.
  - f. Make three copies:
    - 1. One copy for control binder.
    - 2. One copy in unit health record.
    - 3. One copy for quality assurance monitoring.
- C. HRS personnel shall:
  - 1. NEVER transmit the results of HIV tests.
  - 2. NEVER transmit mental health information if there are reasonable alternatives.
  - 3. Not transmit any documents in question until approved by the supervisor of HRS.
- D. To send health information:
  - 1. Prepare facsimile cover letter.
  - 2. Verify by telephone the availability of the authorized receiver before the transaction is made.
  - 3. Request the authorized receiver to sign and return the enclosed receipt form upon receipt of the faxed information.
  - 4. File cover letter and receipt of transmission in a control binder.
- E. To receive transmission of information:
  - 1. Remove received information and count the number of pages received.
  - 2. Read the cover letter and follow instructions received.
  - 3. Verify receipt of the data, as requested.
  - 4. Notify authorized receiver that a FAX has been received.
  - 5. Distribute data as indicated.