



Deaconess Hospital, Inc.
Deaconess CrossPointe Hospital, LLC
The Women's Hospital of Southern Indiana, LLC
Deaconess Urgent Care Centers, LLC
Deaconess Breast Center/Gateway Imaging
Evansville Surgery Center



The following material is provided for the benefit of our Volunteers including Pink Ladies, Red Coats, Blue Coats, Junior Volunteers, Mended Hearts and others. Additional information can be found in the Health Information Protection Standard Manual.

Patient Confidentiality and Volunteers

Patient confidentiality is not a new idea. It was once a matter only of professional ethics and judgment. In recent decades, however, federal and state governments have passed various laws regarding medical privacy. The most recent example of this was the creation in 1996 of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) which, in turn, led to the federal Privacy Rule and Security Rule. These rules are concerned with the privacy of medical information in all forms. We are required by these rules to assure that you receive appropriate information regarding our patient confidentiality policies and procedures.

Policies in full: The policies governing how we use, share and protect patient information are standardized as much as possible throughout the Deaconess Health System. These policies form the Health Information Protection Standard (HIPS) Manual maintained by the Deaconess Health System Privacy Officer. A copy of the HIPS Manual with additional facility-specific policies is maintained at each site by that facility's Privacy Officer.

Notices of Privacy Practices: All patients receiving care at Deaconess facilities are provided a Notice of Privacy Practices. This Notice describes how their health information may be used or shared by the facility and what rights all persons have with regarding their own health information. A copy of the Notice may be picked up at any facility's registration desk.

Safeguarding Patient Information

Your use of patient information: Volunteers may have access to written or computerized patient information depending on the duties performed by the Volunteer. Those who deliver mail or flowers will know the patient's name and room number. Volunteers who make patient satisfaction visits may take notes on patient comments or complaints. Volunteers who redirect mail after discharge will have access to the patient's home address. Volunteers at the Front Desk will have access to the names and room numbers of all inpatients who have chosen to be listed in the Directory as well as certain outpatients undergoing procedures. Some Volunteers will meet with specific patients having a particular diagnosis as part of structured support programs such as Mended Hearts.

All information related to all patients at any health care facility is confidential. The very fact that a person is receiving health care services is confidential even when no other information regarding the person's condition or treatment is revealed. Federal and state laws govern when and how we may release information about patients.

Written Information on Patients:

- Lists of patients, patient labels, patient reports or your notes from patient conversations should not be taken out of the facility.
- Paper with patient information to be discarded should be placed in a recycle bin. These include large locked gray garbage cans with slots in the lids, smaller blue recycle cans and cardboard boxes marked "recycle". Paper placed in a recycle container may not be removed and re-used for any purpose.
- Patient census lists, visitor log books and other paper with patient information should never be left where the general public can see the contents. Census lists and log books maintained in the Information Desk and ICU waiting rooms must be placed out of sight in a locked drawer if the area is to be left unattended.

Computer systems: If your duties require you to use a computer, you must be given a user ID and password. The ID and password is your electronic signature in the system.

- Never give your password to anyone – not even a member of the Information Systems Department
- If you must write down your User ID and password to remember it, keep the information in your wallet but without any reference to Deaconess Hospital.
- Always lock or log off the computer you are using before you walk away – even for a short period.

- Never print out patient information from the computer without first knowing the location of the printer.
- Be aware of persons who may attempt to read confidential information over your shoulder.
- Never allow someone else to work under your ID and password.

The Directory: The Directory is a list of patients... Inpatients to Deaconess Hospital, the Women's Hospital and the Evansville Surgery Center are asked at the time of admission if they want to be listed in the Directory. When a patient chooses to be listed, the patient's room number and general condition (good, fair, guarded, poor) can be given to callers who ask about the patient by name. Inpatients are also asked if they belong to a church and want their pastor to be notified of their admission. When patients want their pastor to be notified, the Religious Life Department will call the pastor. Ministers may pick up lists of their listed parishioners at the Religious Life Office.

Patients sometimes don't want to be listed in the Directory. Patients who choose not to be listed are told to notify their family members or friends of their room number since this will not be given out by the Switchboard or Information Desk. Visitors who ask about an unlisted patient at the Information Desk are told, "I'm sorry. I have no information regarding a person of that name." Mail sent to unlisted individuals is marked "return to sender" and flower deliveries are not accepted.

Volunteers are often stopped in the hallway and asked for the room number of patient so-and-so. These questions should be redirected to the Information Desk.

Talking about patients: We are expected to take reasonable caution to reduce the chance of patient information being overheard or provided to uninvolved persons. The elevators, cafeteria, gift shop and other public locations are not appropriate areas for talking about a patient. You should pull the curtain between the beds if you must talk with a patient who shares his or her room with a roommate.

Discussions of the Patient with Others

Discussion of the patient with the patient's family, friends and other visitors: The patient (or the parents of patients under age 18) control what information is shared with family, friends and other visitors. When the patient cannot make this decision due to incapacity, his or her treatment team will use their professional judgment to share what is in the patient's best interests with the patient's family or friends. When family members or visitors of incapacitated patients ask questions of you, it is always appropriate to redirect their questions to the patient's treatment team.

Discussion of the patient's care with members of the patient's care team: Doctors, nurses, therapists and other treatment team members should have access to any and all information necessary to provide appropriate care for a patient. If a patient shares information with you that is important to his or her treatment, do feel free to share this information with the patient's treatment team.

Discussion of patients with staff members and other volunteers who are not involved in the patients' care: Persons not providing care to the patient should have access to the patient's information only as necessary to perform their jobs. Certain departments of the hospital such as Environmental Services or Engineering and Maintenance require no access to patient information in order to perform their jobs. Others, such as Patient Financial Services, require access only to portions of patient records.

Please keep the "need to know" principle in mind before discussing a patient with anyone other than the patient's care team.

Rights of Patients

Rights of Patients: All persons have certain rights with respect to their health information. Those rights are summarized below.

Right to inspect and copy records: All persons have a right to examine and copy their medical records, billing records related to health care and other records that make up their complete health record or "designated record set."

Right to restrict uses and disclosures: All persons have a right to request that we not use their information for certain purposes or share their information with others they identify.

Right to receive information in a confidential manner: Patients may ask that we send records or call them at locations other than their primary residence in order to assure greater confidentiality of their information.

Right to an accounting of certain disclosures: Patients have the right to request a list of certain disclosures that we are permitted by law to make without their request.

You do Have to Be Careful but You Don't Have to be Perfect

HIPAA does not require that we be perfect. It is nearly impossible to walk through the corridors of a hospital, clinic or medical office without overhearing or seeing snippets of information about patients. HIPAA recognizes the concept of *incidental disclosure* and indicates that incidental disclosures are not a violation of the law.

What is an incidental use or disclosure? When you use or disclose patient information in a manner permitted by law and our policies but the information is unintentionally seen or heard by another person, the disclosure is considered incidental. It is not possible in a hospital environment to avoid all unintentional disclosures. We are expected, however, to keep incidental disclosures to a minimum.

Disclosures aren't incidental when reasonable safeguards are available but ignored. For example, while calling a patient's name in a waiting room is appropriate, calling the patient's name and "Your heart doctor wants to see you" is not appropriate. Discussion of the patient's care could and should occur in a less public area. Even when reasonable safeguards are taken, a disclosure is not incidental if it was otherwise not permitted. For example, quietly pulling the patient's next-door neighbor into a private area to advise the neighbor that the patient has cancer and will have chemotherapy is inappropriate if you haven't first received permission from the patient to share this information with the neighbor.

Ask your supervisor, the facility Privacy Officer or Medical Records Manager if you are unsure whether a disclosure is appropriate.

Questions: Questions not answered by this summary, the HIPS Manual or your supervisor can be addressed to the Privacy Officer in the facility where you perform your Volunteer work:

Deaconess Health System	Candace Foster	812.450.7223
Deaconess Hospital (Includes the COMP Center, Senior Centers, Chancellor Center, LivLite)	Candace Foster	812.450.7223
Deaconess Cross Pointe	Janelle Leighty	812.476.4621
The Women's Hospital	Vicki Belangee	812.842.4332
Deaconess Medical Group and Tri-State Medical Management	Michelle Lambert or Bob LaGessee	812.450.6800
Deaconess MEC Medical Centers	Mary Hulsey	812.436.7380
Deaconess Breast Center and Gateway Imaging	Kathy Dockery	812.422.3254

Finally, do enjoy your time spent at the Deaconess Health System!

Quiz

Please complete the following quiz to test your understanding of the material you have just read. Then sign the Statement of Responsibility and give it to your supervisor.

	True or False	
1		Healthcare Volunteers are subject to the same laws as employees with respect to patient confidentiality.
2		You may share your computer ID and password with other staff as needed.
3		A patient census list should be protected from unnecessary viewing by the public.
4		When the patient is “unpublished” you may give the room number to persons who call and identify themselves as family.
5		The law requires that we never allow any patient information to be seen or heard by any parties other than the patient or the care team

1 True 2 False 3 True 4 False 5 False

Statement of Responsibility

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- A copy of Patient Confidentiality and Volunteers has been provided to me and I have read it.
- I understand that I am responsible for following the policies and procedures of Deaconess Health System regarding patient confidentiality

Signature of Volunteer

Date

Printed name

Signature of Parent if Volunteer is Under Age 18



WORKFORCE¹ MEMBER'S STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidential information is defined as information not to be disclosed to second parties. Confidential information may fall into one of several categories: patient, employee, financial, decision support, or business process. Confidential information may appear on paper, appear on a computer system, or occur in conversation.

I acknowledge the following responsibilities:

1. I understand that I am responsible for complying with the HIPAA policies and procedures which are available to me.
2. I will not disclose confidential information to any person or entity other than as necessary to perform my job and as permitted under policies and procedures.
3. I will not access confidential information unless I have a need to know this information in order to perform my job.
4. I will not take confidential information from the premises without permission of the appropriate information owner.
5. I understand these additional responsibilities apply if my duties require computer system access:
 - a. I understand that the **user identification number and password** issued to me is a unique code that identifies me to the Deaconess Health System, Inc.² computer systems. All system entries that I make will reference my identity with this code. This code replaces my handwritten signature and is, in fact, within the computer system, equal to a handwritten signature in legal terms.
 - b. I understand that I am legally responsible for all entries that are made using my **user identification number and password**. I further understand that any information I access from the Deaconess Health System, Inc. computer network is strictly confidential and to be used only in the performance of my necessary duties.
 - c. I will notify my immediate supervisor or other department manager immediately if at any time I feel that the confidentiality of my code has been broken, so that he/she may have the old **user identification number and password** canceled and a new one issued.
 - d. I will notify my immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department if I should have a change of name.
 - e. I understand that a transfer or change in my job responsibilities may require a change in the user accesses associated with my job.
 - f. I understand that if I disregard the confidentiality of my password and system accesses, use the user identification or passwords of another person, allow another person to use mine, or fail to comply with these policies, I will be subject to the actions as outlined below.
6. I understand that if I disregard the responsibilities as outlined here:
 - a. As an employee, I will be violating the standards of employee conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from the employment of Deaconess Health System, Inc.
 - b. As a workforce member, I understand that Deaconess Health System, Inc., is entitled to all remedies available at law or in equity, including but not limited to monetary damages, temporary restraining orders and injunctions, to recover damages from and/or enjoin any such violation.

I have read and agree to abide with the above Statement of Confidentiality.

Signature

Printed Name

User ID

Date

School (complete if a student)

Signature of Parent or Guardian (if Volunteer under 18)

¹ In its definition of workforce member, HIPAA includes employee, volunteer, student-in-training, and others subject to our policies.

² For purposes of this Statement of Confidentiality, "Deaconess Health System, Inc." shall be defined to include Deaconess Health System, Inc., and any and all of its subsidiaries, affiliates, and related entities, including but not limited to Deaconess Hospital, Inc., Deaconess Women's Hospital of Southern Indiana, LLC, Deaconess/MEC Medical Centers, LLC, Deaconess Cross Pointe, LLC, and Tri-State Medical Management, Inc.