



**Office of Institutional Integrity  
East Carolina University  
HIPAA Privacy and Security Best Practices**

- **Disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI)**
  - Make every effort to speak to a patient directly. Verify who you are talking to.
  - Never leave specific health information for patients on voicemail.
  - Avoid discussions about patients in hallways, elevators, or other public places where others may overhear your conversation.
  
- **Appropriate Safeguards of PHI**
  - Never share passwords.
  - Never leave patient information unattended.
  - Ensure workstations and devices are secured when not in use.
  - Log out of the EHR or any system that contains PHI when vacating workstations and devices.
  - Never access any medical record or other PHI unless you have a legitimate business or patient care purpose.
  
- **Electronic Transmission of PHI**
  - Limit e-mail transmissions of PHI when necessary.
  - Take proper precautions when sending PHI electronically:
  - Encrypt emails containing PHI when emailing outside of the institution (other than ecu.edu).  
    Contact ITCS for instructions on encrypting email.
  
- **Photography/Social Media**
  - Do not post sensitive patients' or other care providers' information online.
  - Maintain appropriate boundaries of the patient-clinician relationship.
  - Report unprofessional postings to your supervisor.
  
- **Portable Devices**
  - Portable devices storing PHI should be encrypted, must have a passcode, and always be physically and technically secure.
  - Any loss, theft, or unauthorized use must be reported immediately to ITCS and/or OII.
  
- **Concerns**
  - When there is a privacy complaint and/or concern, report to your supervisor, or contact the HIPAA Privacy Office immediately.
  - Complaints and/or concerns are taken very seriously. They are investigated in detail in order to comply with regulatory requirements.
  
- **Violations/Sanctions**
  - ECU is required to have and apply internal sanctions against employees who fail to comply with policies and procedures.
  
- **Where to get more information**
  - Website: <https://hipaa.ecu.edu>
  - Email: [HEALTHCAREPRIVACY@ecu.edu](mailto:HEALTHCAREPRIVACY@ecu.edu)
  - Phone: Office 252-744-5200 Hotline 1-866-515-4587