Healthcare Legal Policies and Ethics Overview Infographic

Are you in the know? This infographic I came across by the University of Cincinnati provides a few highlights on HIPAA, patient rights, medical malpractice and 5 tips to remain in compliance with the rules.

Many doctors who are busy in the day-to-day demands of providing quality care for their patients don't realize how important legal policies can be to their medical practice. But not understanding legal matters in healthcare can get ugly.

The Importance of HIPAA

HIPAA was passed in 1996 to protect patient information. Patient information is in the hands of healthcare providers making them responsible to protect it and use it carefully. A basic right of a patient is the right to his own information, but HIPAA takes it a step further. HIPAA also allows a patient to know how his information is being used by others.

HONING IN ON HIPAA

HIPAA

is a federal law enacted in 1996 that protects identifiable health information transmitted or maintained in any form.

H EALTH
I NSURANCE
P ORTABILITY
A CCOUNTABILITY
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THE HIPAA PRIVACY RULE

offers federal protections for Protected Health Information (PHI) handled by health professionals and other entities. It also provides patients with rights regarding how their information is handled.

WHAT IS PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION (PHI)?

PERSONAL INFORMATION
your doctors and health care professionals place in your medical record

MEDICAL RECORDS

CONVERSATIONS
your doctor engages in with medical professionals about your care and treatment

PERSONAL DETAILS
including billing information, in your health insurer's data system

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IDENTIFIERS
such as home address, cell phone number and driver's license number, as well as biometric identifiers like fingerprints and full-face photographs

Patients can rest knowing that their information will be kept private from those not directly involved in their care. Most importantly, the law prevents the wrong people from getting a hold of any personal information. Ultimately, confidentiality protects both the patient and the provider.

So what information is protected under HIPAA? Some types of protected health information (PHI) include medical records and billing information.

Also included are photographs, fingerprints, and anything else that can be used to identify someone. Even conversations

HIPAA IN THE WORKPLACE

5 IMPORTANT TIPS FOR STAYING IN COMPLIANCE

1.
Before releasing health data over the phone, verify the caller's identity. Be aware of anyone standing or sitting near you when you need to discuss health information over the phone. If needed, move to a private area.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

2.
If you are submitting health information by mail, email, or fax, always verify the mailing and email addresses and fax numbers of the intended recipient before sending.

3.
Question the level of data and the reasons people or entities request health information. Before releasing the data, always verify that the requester has the right to receive the information.

PASSWORD

4.
Secure sensitive information. Adjust your computer monitor to prevent accidental disclosure. Use computer passwords and access codes on your personal computer. Return patient files to their proper locations after use.

5.
Only access health information you have a legitimate need to view.

CONFIDENTIAL

that your doctor has with other healthcare professionals about your care are protected under HIPAA!

The graphic offers 5 tips on how medical professionals can stay HIPAA compliant. Some ways include verifying caller identity, fax numbers, and email addresses. Do not release information without verifying that the requester has the right to view it. Additionally, don't view any information that is not necessary to do your job.

THREE CATEGORIES OF MEDICAL MALPRACTICE

1. FAILURE TO DIAGNOSE

▶ **Benchmark**

Would a different health outcome have been achieved if a competent professional identified a patient's illness and offered a different diagnosis than what was originally given?

2. IMPROPER TREATMENT

▶ **Benchmark**

Has a health care professional treated a patient in a way no other competent professional would or selected the correct treatment but administered it improperly?

3. FAILURE TO WARN A PATIENT OF KNOWN RISKS

▶ **Benchmark**

Did a health care professional tell a patient about known risks of procedures or treatments before the patient decided on treatment?

Was the patient (who was aware of risks and who would have chosen not to carry out the procedure) hurt in a way the health care professional should have cautioned could happen?

Patients' Rights

Another topic discussed in the infographic is patient rights. We know that under HIPAA, patients have the right to have their information kept private. But patients also have the right to access information about their healthcare coverage, including costs and payment decisions. They have a right to a range of options when it comes to their healthcare, including providers and treatment options. This allows them to make informed decisions about their healthcare journey.

PATIENTS' RIGHTS*

▶ALL PATIENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

SIGN HERE
Informed consent for treatment options, access to specialists and confidentiality

INVOICE
Information about their health care coverage, including costs, coverage payment decisions and appealing unsatisfactory decisions, that's easy to understand

DOCTORS
Access to a choice of health care providers and information about providers

FINE PRINT
Disclosure about "what provider incentives or restrictions might influence practice patterns"

*Excerpted from the National Health Council Principles of Patients' Rights and Responsibilities

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SOURCES

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Manny Oliverez, CPC, is a 20-year healthcare veteran and the CEO and co-founder of Capture Billing, a medical billing services company located outside of Washington, D.C. He teaches the nation's physicians, administrators, and medical practices how to maximize billing and revenue cycle management processes. Manny also frequently posts articles and videos on his award-winning healthcare blog. For more information on Manny and his company, please visit his website, or call (703)327-1800. And if you're on LinkedIn, please look for him there too. **READ MORE**

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