

**Title: PATIENT CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Scope:**

All LABORATORIES Northwest employees, including but not limited to, employees based in hospitals, couriers and staff that are assigned to our Patient Service Centers and satellite laboratories.

**Policy Statement:**

Patient health information is protected under a federal law called the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). All locations must adhere to these rules and regulations. As an integral part of the MultiCare Health System, all LABORATORIES Northwest employees will follow the defined HIPAA standards, policies and procedures located in the MHSnet Policies that are available to all personnel.

**Procedure:** Key steps to protecting patient's health care information for HIPAA compliance by the laboratory include:

- A. Users of the Laboratory Information System (LIS) will abide by the "Users Code of Conduct." Patient Health Information (PHI) obtained from the LIS will be kept confidential.
- B. All users of PHI will undergo an initial training on confidentiality and compliance as part of their new employee orientation. The employee will be required to sign the MHS User Confidentiality and Use Statement as well as a separate Laboratory Confidentiality Statement prior to being assigned the appropriate level of security. The level of access in the LIS is directly proportional to the employee's responsibilities.
- C. HIPAA and confidentiality topics are reviewed annually by staff as part of their annual mandatory education. An issue focused presentation is prepared annually by the MHS Corporate Compliance office and presented to all staff by their direct leadership team.
- D. Any security incidents will be assessed by following the MultiCare Health System Administrative HIPAA policies.

**Related Policies:** MultiCare Health System Policy and Procedure:

- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - Administrative"
- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - Patient Rights"
- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - Use and Disclosure of PHI"
- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - Disclosures of Law Enforcement"
- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - Minimum Necessary Requirements"
- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - ID Verification of Individuals Requesting PHI"
- "HIPAA Privacy Compliance - Protected Health Information Breach Notification"

**Summary of Edits:** 11/30/2011 Reformatted

1/9/2013 Updated terminology and added additional medical directors.

1/14/2014 Updated MHS policies. Renamed to "Patient Confidentiality" and expanded Medical Director review.

9/2014 Update Medical Director review; removed Dr. Hodges and added Dr. Love.

**References:**

College of American Pathologists GEN.41303

College of American Pathologists GEN.41304  
Health Information Portability and Accountability Act

**Point of Contact:** Laboratory Regulatory Compliance Consultant

**Approval By:**

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**Date of Approval:**

3/15/2012  
1/10/2013  
9/22/14  
2/25/14

Original Date:

11/2009

Revision Dates:

11/30/2011;1/2013;1/2014;9/2014

Reviewed with no Changes Dates:

11/2010;3/2012