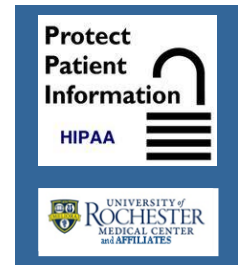


HIPAA HIGHLIGHTS

August 2023



Patient Privacy, Secure Chat and Professionalism

Secure Chat is a great tool to facilitate patient care and enable health care team communication for *non-urgent* patient situations. This may include informational content or patient situations that need timely attention and response but do not require immediate decision-making or real-time action.

Recently the Privacy Office has received a larger number of concerns related to patient privacy and content in Secure Chat. After reviewing these reported concerns, our investigations in some cases have required us to notify the patient of a privacy breach as well as sanction staff involved. In some cases, these concerns have not risen to a patient privacy breach, but the content within the chat was not considered professional and there was further follow-up by management and Human Resources.

Please remember the following when using Secure Chat:

1. Start with the four R's:
 - Right Person – pick your contact and avoid group messages or adding FYI recipients
 - Right Message – Strive for one and done, be professional and to the point
 - Right Way – match your mode of communication with the patient's safety in mind
 - Right Time – is your recipient available, response time vary on availability
2. Avoid Excessive Messaging
 - Overuse of threads or overuse of common social responses using additional messages is discouraged
 - Each message represents an intrusion into the receiving recipients' workflow. Less is more.
3. Keep it Professional
 - Avoid abbreviations that are not mutually agreed upon. Use proper punctuation. Avoid use of emojis, negative or derogatory terms.
 - Avoid personal conversations with colleagues
 - This is Secure Chat...not Snap Chat
 - Communication regarding a patient should be with others that are part of the care team or the recipient has a business reason for to receive information regarding the patient
 - Though Secure Chat messages are not part of the legal medical record, they can be retrieved if necessary and they are legally discoverable.

Secure Chat is a business tool provided through eRecord and used to provide more efficient two-way communication amongst clinical teams to improve the efficiency and quality of communication regarding our patients. Please use as intended to provide the highest quality care to our patients and reflect the ICARE values when using this tool.

For additional information on any HIPAA-related topics, please refer to the URMS intranet site at <http://sites.mc.rochester.edu/departments/hipaa/> . For any questions regarding HIPAA, please contact your [Privacy Officer](#) or [HIPAA Security Official](#).