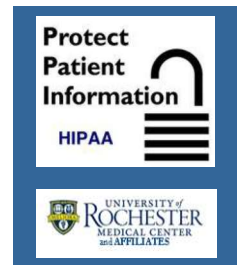


# HIPAA HIGHLIGHTS

*December 2025*

## Rules on Accessing Medical Records



Snooping in the medical record of family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and celebrities is one of the most common HIPAA violations committed by employees. These violations can result in termination of employment. Accessing patient medical records for reasons other than those permitted by the Privacy Rule is a violation of patient privacy. Employees should only be accessing patient records if they have a **job-related reason**.

Employees should not access their own records using their work credentials. They should use their MyChart (their patient portal) account. A friend or relative cannot give an employee verbal permission to look in their record. [MyChart proxy](#) access should be obtained to view the record of someone other than the patient. Below is some guidance to help in certain situations.

**Can I Access My Own Records?** No. Only through your MyChart, NOT through your electronic medical record using your employee log-in.

**Can I Access the Medical Record of a Family Member?** Generally, no. If the family member would like you to have access to their records, they can make you a MyChart proxy. If there is a time where you are the only employee working and need to access the record for a business reason and you cannot ask a co-worker or manager to assist the patient, access is acceptable. The minimum necessary information should be reviewed to determine what is needed for that patient during that visit. Whenever possible, you should ask a co-worker or manager to take care of the patient.

**Can I Access the Medical Record of My Co-worker, Neighbor or Friend?** Generally, no. If there is a time where you are the only employee working and need to access the record for a business reason and you cannot ask a co-worker or manager to assist the patient, access is acceptable. The minimum necessary information should be viewed to do what is needed for that patient for that visit. Whenever possible, you should ask a co-worker or manager to take care of the patient.

If you look at someone's record who may be an acquaintance or person of interest and you do not have a business reason to do so, this is snooping, and it violates the HIPAA Privacy laws. Privacy Pro (our advanced chart auditing software) is very sophisticated, so think twice before letting your curiosity take over!

There are different [HIPAA sanctions](#) that could be imposed depending on the incident. Sanctions can include a letter of expectation, re-education, a written warning, a final written warning and even termination, licensure, or possible legal consequences.