

Uses & Disclosures of PHI

Releases of Health Information to Law Enforcement - Frequently Asked Questions

With HIPAA compliance now a reality and part of daily operations at OHSU, there have been questions about the appropriate procedures employees should follow if a law enforcement official requests health information about an OHSU patient.

Below are frequently asked questions, which will assist employees in understanding the appropriate protocols to follow.

If you have additional questions or concerns related to releasing health information to law enforcement officials, please contact OHSU Public Safety at 503 494-7744 or the Office of Information Privacy and Security at 503 494-8849.

- Question:** What do I do if a law enforcement official approaches or contacts our unit/practice and asks for information about a patient?
Answer: Contact Public Safety immediately at 503 494-7744. Public Safety is the initial liaison with law enforcement officials and their requests. Before law enforcement officials are provided access to patients (not in custody) the attending physician must be contacted to confirm medical stability. Please also note that the expected discharge date of a patient not in custody may not be provided to a requesting law enforcement official.
- Question:** An OHSU patient is in the custody of a law enforcement official. What health information may I release to the official?
Answer: Please contact Public Safety at 503 494-7744 to act as the initial liaison. The level of confidentiality afforded a patient in custody should be the same as any other patient. Note: A person on parole or detainer is NOT in custody.
- Question:** What do I do if I find out that an OHSU patient has a warrant for his/her arrest?
Answer: Immediately contact Public Safety at 503 494-7744. Public Safety will notify the appropriate law enforcement agency of the presence of a patient for whom a warrant has been discovered through an approved records check or a patient suspected of engaging in on-site criminal activity.
- Question:** What health information am I allowed to provide to OHSU Public Safety?
Answer: OHSU Public Safety will only ask for health information that is the minimum necessary to perform their duties. Therefore, please release the requested information.
- Question:** Who can I contact with additional questions?
Answer: Two departments are able to assist you:
OHSU Department of Public Safety -- 503 494-7744
Office of Information Privacy and Security -- 503 494-8849