



# Patient Privacy & Confidentiality

**Maintaining patient confidentiality means keeping information about a patient's health care private.**

**Only people who need to know information should receive it.**

*At Mason General Hospital & Family of Clinics, we put patients first. This includes patient privacy and confidentiality.*

## **Patient confidentiality past and present**

In the past, medical information was neatly stored in file folders away from the eyes of those who did not need to know. Now, health care information is computerized, e-mailed, faxed and copied, providing ample opportunities for others to review it. Due to the possibility of breaches, many patients are nervous about how their health information will be used, causing some patients to be secretive about their medical histories, avoid treatment, or change from one provider to another. However, in health care today, standards are present to protect confidentiality and to alleviate patient concerns in this area.

### **What is confidential information?**

Under Federal and State Laws, as well as the District's policies, all information regarding patients is confidential information. Confidential information includes both medical data as well as demographic data. Medical information regarding employees who are patients is also confidential information. Confidential information may be revealed to certain individuals or agencies in order to provide medical care to the patient or to receive payment for the care, and in certain circumstances, to Public Health Agencies. In any other circumstance, patient information is to be kept strictly confidential.



# Patient Confidentiality

## Protected Health Information (PHI)

In order to maintain confidentiality, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) rule addresses protected health information, which is information used to identify the patient.

To protect PHI confidentiality, the patient:

- must be given written notice of privacy practices.
- must give authorization before providers can disclose PHI outside of treatment, payment and health care operations.
- has the right to request restrictions of use and disclosure of PHI.

## Compliance with HIPAA

Each health care facility must comply with the HIPAA privacy standards. Health care facilities must inform patients of their privacy policies and provide training to all staff and volunteers regarding HIPAA regulations. Noncompliance with HIPAA regulations is a federal offense.

## How MGH monitors your information

Chart auditing to identify:

- Inappropriate chart access by job role
- Random auditing
- Focused auditing

Access and monitoring reports are done on a weekly and monthly basis.

**Confidentiality is everyone's responsibility.** Patients can access their confidential health information by contacting MGH&FC's HIM Department at 360-427-9587.

## Mason General Hospital & Family of Clinics

### Contact Us

Phone: **360-426-1161**

**[www.masongeneral.com](http://www.masongeneral.com)**

For more information regarding your patient privacy, please visit our website and scroll down to Privacy Policy and HIPAA at the bottom of the page. There you can read our privacy statement and have the opportunity to contact us with any questions or concerns.

### Mission Statement

We put patients first. We provide quality medical care to assist the individuals of our community to restore and preserve their health. We conserve patient and community resources through a sustainable, financially viable, coordinated system of health care delivery.

