

WHITING FORENSIC HOSPITAL OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE MANUAL

SECTION II:	ORGANIZATION FOCUSED FUNCTIONS
CHAPTER 9:	Management of Information
PROCEDURE 9.3:	Faxing Patient Health Information
Governing Body Approval:	April 27, 2018
REVISED:	

PURPOSE: To ensure confidentiality of Protected Health Information (PHI) while faxing patient information.

SCOPE: All Clinical Staff, HIM and Unit Clerks

POLICY:

It is the policy of the Whiting Forensic Hospital (WFH) that staff shall ensure confidentiality of PHI while faxing patient information and to utilize faxing of PHI when other alternatives such as mail are not feasible. It is the policy of WFH that PHI is faxed by Health Information Management (HIM) staff in most cases. Clinical staff/Unit Clerks may fax PHI to expedite discharge planning.

PROCEDURES:

1. Faxing PHI:

- A. Obtain the patient's written Authorization for Use and Disclosure of PHI (WFH-184) or Authorization for Release of PHI for Reimbursement prior to faxing PHI for purposes other than treatment, payment or healthcare operations. If the patient is conserved, the conservator's authorization is required.

- B. Staff process the fax in the following manner by including:
 - 1. a fax transmittal cover page (WFH-527), which includes a confidentiality statement, your name, date, time of fax, telephone and fax number(s) and the number of pages being sent;
 - 2. a cover letter (WFH-269) noting the information sent;
 - 3. a copy of the authorization form (either WFH-184 or WFH-514); and
 - 4. the authorized information.
- C. Before transmitting the fax, confirm the following:
 - 1. the intended recipient is available to receive the fax;
 - 2. the fax machine is located in a secure location with controlled access; or
 - 3. the material will be immediately secured upon arrival.
- D. Visually check the number displayed on the screen for accuracy before proceeding with transmission.
- E. Fax the information and wait for the fax transmittal report.
- F. Check the fax transmittal report to ensure correct transmission and to enable rapid action if information was not transmitted as intended.
- G. File the original Facsimile Transmittal Form, cover letter, and the Transmittal Report in the Correspondence section of the patient's medical record,

2. A Misdirected Fax:

- A. **If staff becomes aware that the faxed information was transmitted to an unintended party:**
 - 1. fax a request to the unintended party notifying them that information was sent in error and requesting that they call to discuss disposition of documents;
 - 2. confirm documents received and instruct the unintended party to shred all documents; and
 - 3. complete an Incident Report and forward to the Director of Accreditation, Compliance and Performance Improvement for processing.
- B. Periodically check the accuracy of pre-programmed fax numbers to minimize the possibility of transmission to unintended parties.