Key points to avoid careless handling of personal or confidential patient information that may result in unauthorized disclosure

**Careless Practice:** Protected Patient Information exposed to unauthorized individuals.

**Key Points:**
- Don’t leave charts lying open and unattended.
- Shred, shred, shred when finished with documents!
- Always lock your computer screen when left unattended.
- Turn papers with identifiable patient information away from view.
- Remove and properly dispose (Shred-it Bin) of all patient information from conference rooms.

**Careless Practice:** Discussions of patient information in a public place.

**Key Points:**
- Discuss confidential matters in a private area.
- Lower voices when discussing patient information if a private area is not available.
- Avoid discussing patient information in the elevators, hallways, cafeteria, and waiting rooms.
- Avoid discussing patient information on cell phones in public areas.
- Avoid using patient full name when discussing treatment and care in open areas.

**Careless Practice:** Discussion of patient-sensitive or other confidential information.

**Key Points:**
- Ask family members and/or friends to step out of the room before talking with the patient, or;
- Be sure you have the patient’s permission before discussing confidential information in front of family members and/or friends.

**Careless Practice:** Misdirected faxes or emails containing confidential patient information.

**Key Points:**
- Verify you have the correct fax number or email address prior to sending.
- Use MyHealthta/Vanderbilt as an alternative to email and faxing when communicating with patients.
- Use File Transfer Application (Accellion) when emailing confidential information within or outside of VUMC.
- Use a cover sheet when faxing!

IM 10-30.13 “Protection and Security of Protected Health Information”
IM 10-30.15 “Electronic Messaging of Individually Identifiable Patient and Other Sensitive Information”
IM 10-30.18 “Disposal of Confidential Information”
IM 10-30.02 “Breach Notification: Unauthorized Access, Use, or Disclosure of Individually Identifiable Patient or Other Personal Information”
IM 10-30.02 “Sanctions for Privacy and Information Security Violations”

For more information go to: [www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/privacy](http://www.mc.vanderbilt.edu/privacy) or e-mail the Privacy Office at [privacy.office@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:privacy.office@vanderbilt.edu)