Faxing Confidential Information

The patient portal, My Health at Vanderbilt, is the preferred mode of electronic communication between VUMC clinical staff/faculty and a specific patient. Faxing information to a patient is discouraged, but if you must send information by fax you need to know the following:

Faxing confidential information:

- VUMC staff should take reasonable and appropriate precautions when using fax machines to transmit confidential documents or when auto-faxing directly from an electronic system or application (e.g., using the StarPanel fax database).
- Staff should use the confirmed database to access fax numbers or confirm with the intended recipient a specific fax number before faxing any protected health information.
- The Provider Communication Wizard contains an accurate provider database and is the preferred mode for faxing patient information to and between providers.
- Before responding to a fax request to an outside individual, the fax number must be confirmed as the correct fax number by the individual making the request.
- Configure your fax machine to generate a confirmation report, if your fax machine has this option.
- Faxing of confidential information must include a cover sheet with the following:
  - Sender Name
  - Recipient Name
  - Sender Business Phone #
  - Recipient Business Phone#
  - Sender Business Fax#
  - Recipient Business Fax#
  - Transmission time and date (if not stamped by fax or computer)
  - Total number of pages (including cover sheet) and Confidentiality Statement: See policy: Faxing Confidential Information

Report all faxing errors generated by VUMC staff to the Privacy Office at (615) 936-3594

Receiving Confidential Information:

- Fax machines used for transmitting confidential information should be located in a secure area that is not accessible by the public.
- Immediately remove the fax from the fax machine and deliver to the appropriate recipient.
- When confidential information is faxed in error, immediately inform the sender and destroy the document by placing in a shredder bin.

IM 10-10.03 Faxing Confidential Information
IM 10-30.12 Sanctions for Privacy and Information Security Violations