

Vol. 14 No. 2, June 2020

## SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION

Did you know that we have a policy about solicitation and distribution?

NHRMC and its affiliates, which include the NHRMC Physicians Group, Pender Memorial Hospital and NHRMC Home Care, prohibits solicitations of any kind by employees and non-employees for any purpose other than designated NHRMC and Affiliates sponsored programs or events. Distribution of non-NHRMC and Affiliates sponsored literature by employees and non-employees in working areas on NHRMC and Affiliates property is prohibited.

The distribution of literature includes, but is not limited to, personal "for sale" signs, club announcements, political announcements, religious offerings, and commercial business advertising. Other examples include such activities as conducting bake sales, selling raffle tickets, gathering pledges for walkathons, selling Girl Scout cookies or Avon products.



Items for sale may be posted on the Intranet via Employee Classifieds. For approved items, see the policy for Classifieds on the same page.

**Corporate Compliance Hotline:**  
**1.800.348.9847 or**  
**[www.MyComplianceReport.com](http://www.MyComplianceReport.com)**  
**Access ID: "NHR"**

# Compliance



# CAPSULES

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Question:

**May I advertise a non-NHRMC sponsored event or program using NHRMC's platforms or resources, even if it's for a good cause?**

Answer:

*According to policy, we may only solicit or distribute literature for NHRMC sponsored events. This means that you may not advertise or conduct fundraising via flyers, Yammer, or otherwise, when it is not for a NHRMC sponsored event.*

### Question:

**What are examples of NHRMC sponsored events?**

Answer:

*Events that are organized by NHRMC's Foundation, the American Heart Walk, the United Way, and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation are examples of NHRMC sponsored events.*

### Question:

**How might I obtain NHRMC's support or sponsorship for a NEW program or event?**

Answer:

*You may apply to the governance committee for sponsorships and community affairs. Contact Brenda Reeves in Marketing and Public Affairs for assistance.*

### Question:

**A local business has offered to give the hospital advertising items for distribution to patients. May we accept these items and give them to our patients?**

Answer:

*While employees may accept certain advertising items and souvenirs of nominal value from vendors, per the Vendor Relations Policy, it would not be appropriate to pass along such items to patients. If we did, it would appear as though we were endorsing certain businesses and not others. These items may be permitted at a public health fair whereas vendors are invited to participate.*

## COVID & Patient Confidentiality



There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has created a lot of anxiety among patients, staff and the community. Our amazing staff continue to put their lives on the line every day to care for patients, without a clue as to what diseases they will face. Though we are taking the necessary precautions, there is still the likelihood that someone we know or someone with whom we work will become infected. We want to remind you that regardless of who the patient is – whether a member of the public or a healthcare worker - HIPAA protections still apply.

Please be mindful of the following:

- **Do NOT** share proprietary hospital information with others outside of the organization, unless it's specifically within the scope of your job to do so.
- **Do NOT** post PHI or de-identified information on social media. Sharing key details, such as age and date of service, without a name, may potentially identify an individual. If you see something, please say something.
- **RESPECT** the privacy of fellow healthcare workers if they test positive for the coronavirus. If you are impacted, you will be tested but please respect their privacy.
- **Do NOT** access medical information regarding your friends and co-workers. We monitor access and have several auto-alerts, including access to COVID patients and co-workers. Your access is not a secret.

If you have any concerns regarding the privacy of your own medical information, please call the Compliance Department at ph. 667.6904.

**HIPAA: DISCLOSURES TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY Q&A**

**Question:**

*Does the HIPAA Privacy Rule permit a doctor to discuss a patient's health status, treatment, or payment arrangements with the patient's family and friends?*

Answer:

Yes, but the hospital should get verbal permission from individuals or otherwise be able to reasonably infer that the patient does not object, when possible.

For example:

- A doctor may give information about a patient's mobility limitations to a friend driving the patient home from the hospital.
- A hospital may discuss a patient's payment options with her adult daughter.
- A doctor may instruct a patient's roommate about proper medicine dosage when she comes to pick up her friend from the hospital.

**HIPAA: DISCLOSURES TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY Q&A (CONT'D)**

**Question:**

*If the patient is not present or is incapacitated, may a health care provider still share the patient's health information with family, friends, or others involved in the patient's care or payment for care?*

Answer:

Yes. If the patient is not present or is incapacitated, a health care provider may share the patient's information with family, friends, or others as long as the health care provider determines, based on professional judgment, that it is in the best interest of the patient. When someone other than a friend or family member is involved, the health care provider must be reasonably sure that the patient asked the person to be involved in his or her care or payment for care. The health care provider may discuss only the information that the person involved needs to know about the patient's care or payment.

For example:

- A surgeon who did emergency surgery on a patient may tell the patient's spouse about the patient's condition while the patient is unconscious.

**HIPAA: DISCLOSURES TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY Q&A (CONT'D)**

Examples continued:

- A hospital may discuss a patient's bill with her adult son who calls the hospital with questions about charges to his mother's account.  
BUT:
- A nurse may not tell a patient's friend about a past medical problem that is unrelated to the patient's current condition.
- A health care provider is not required by HIPAA to share a patient's information when the patient is not present or is incapacitated and can choose to wait until the patient has an opportunity to agree to the disclosure.

**HIPAA STATS, January – June 2020**

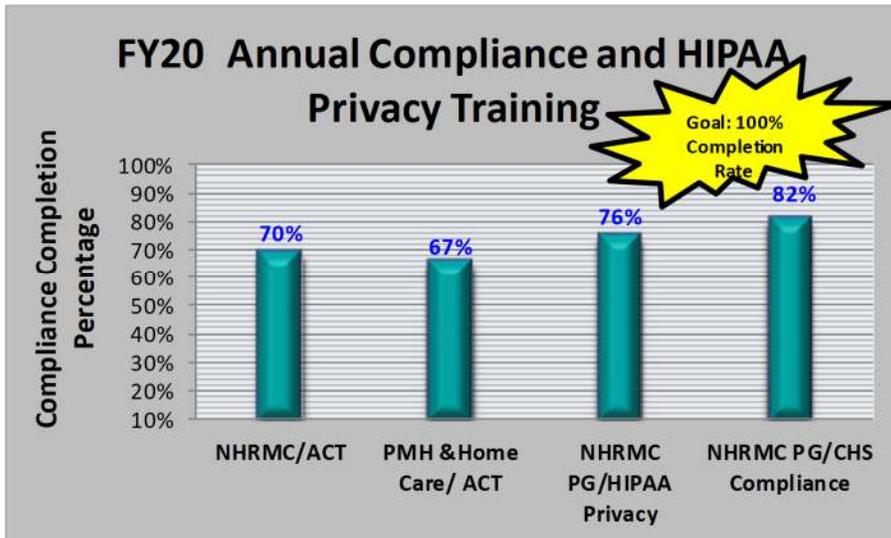
	Violations	Inadvertent Breaches
NHRMC & PMH/HC	6	9
NHRMC PG	6	5
Business Partners	0	0

HIPAA violations are addressed according to the HR Policy, "Progressive Discipline."

**Compliance CAPSULES**

**ANNUAL COMPLIANCE & PRIVACY EDUCATION FY 2020**

FY 2020 mandatory computer-based learning modules are due for completion **by August 1, 2020**. FY20 completion rates for compliance and privacy modules were reported to the Compliance Committee and the Board.



**COMPLIANCE QUIZ FOR MOVIE TICKETS**

**Email Your Responses to Robin Pearsall by July 31, 2020**

1. Which policy instructs employees on whether they are permitted to solicit for events, items or causes?
2. What are examples of NHRMC sponsored events?
3. True or False: HIPAA protections do not apply to healthcare workers who contract the coronavirus.
4. True or False: A nurse may tell a patient's friend about a past medical problem that is unrelated to the patient's current condition.
5. True or False: HIPAA violations are addressed according to HR's Progressive Discipline Policy.

**Congratulations to Kenzie Holcombe, winner of movie tickets for the December 2019 newsletter!**

*"Ethics is about how we meet the challenge of doing the right thing, when that will cost more than we want to pay."  
The Josephson Institute of Ethics*