



# PRIVACY PROGRAM BULLETIN:

## Confidentiality of Colleague Patient Information in the Workplace

October 2025

COMPLIANCE and PRIVACY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### Applicable Policies

Policy and Procedure (P&P) 2410, Allowable Uses and Disclosures for Protected Health Information

P&P 2450, Disclosing the Minimum Necessary Protected Health Information

P&P 2902, Confidentiality

### Other Resources

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Uses and Disclosures for Treatment, Payment, and Health Care Operations

Contains active links.  
Distribution via email is preferred. Print as necessary.

## Background

UC Davis Health is committed to maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of *all* of our patients' information. This is of critical importance, especially when the information pertains to a work colleague and is obtained through one's professional role at UC Davis Health. No patient information may be verbally, electronically, or physically accessed, used, or disclosed without proper authorization or an assigned work-related purpose; for example, treatment, payment, health care operations (TPO).

## What You Should Know

Maintaining confidentiality and privacy is a legal and ethical obligation. Patient information is protected under UC Policy, as well as federal and state laws. Verbally disclosing patient information — whether in casual conversation, in meetings, or in public spaces — without proper authorization or TPO is inappropriate and a violation of confidentiality.

### Examples of Inappropriate Verbal Disclosures

"I saw 'X's' chart—he's being treated for anxiety."

"Did you know 'X' was in the ER last night? I saw it in the EMR system."

"I think 'X' is on medical leave because of her surgery last month."

Even if shared without malice, these statements are inappropriate, cause harm, and violate privacy policies and regulations.

### Best Practices

Access patient information only when necessary for your work task.

**Never** discuss patients outside of authorized work-related purposes.

Report any suspected unauthorized verbal disclosures to UC Davis Health Compliance and Privacy Services.

### Conclusion

Respecting patient confidentiality and privacy is fundamental to ethical healthcare and workplace integrity. This responsibility is heightened when the patient is a colleague, as the potential for harm, embarrassment, or mistrust is greater and negatively impacts UC Davis Health's reputation.

## Questions?

Please review the policies and resources listed in the left sidebar of this bulletin. Please contact the [UC Davis Health Compliance and Privacy Services team](mailto:privacyprogram@health.ucdavis.edu) at [privacyprogram@health.ucdavis.edu](mailto:privacyprogram@health.ucdavis.edu) or (916) 734-8808 if you need support.