



Faxing Protected Health Information

We occasionally use the fax machine to send and/ or request patient health information (PHI) to and from other health care providers.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule permits dentists and other members of the dental team to disclose PHI to other dental providers for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations. The rule also requires that we have appropriate safeguards in place to protect the privacy of the information we are sending or receiving through a fax machine.

Each individual working with patient health information is responsible for the confidentiality of the information. Imagine:

- *Instead of sending fax to the intended provider's office, you sent it to the patient's employer.*
- *Instead of sending fax with highly sensitive health information to the intended receiver, you sent it to the fax number of a local TV station?*

A misdirected fax breaches patient privacy by exposing their health information to an individual who has not been authorized to see their information.

All misdirected faxes must be reported to the HIPAA Privacy Officer so that the breach may be investigated quickly and any required actions for reporting and notification can be taken.

By following a few basic tips when we fax patient health information, we can ensure the protection of our patient's privacy.

Fax Basics:

Your fax machine should be in a secure location so unauthorized individuals are not able to see sent/received information.

Always use a cover sheet that includes your name and contact information and our confidentiality statement

Before Sending the Fax

- Confirm that the number you have for the receiving party is correct.
- Confirm in the display window that you have typed the number correctly – before you hit send.
- Confirm that any preprogrammed fax numbers are still correct.
- Use a fax cover sheet with a HIPAA confidentiality statement.

If you send a fax to the wrong recipient:

- Notify the HIPAA Privacy Officer immediately!
- Attempt to retrieve all copies of the fax or ensure the recipient has appropriately destroyed the fax.
- Complete the Breach Incident Form and submit to the HIPAA Privacy Officer immediately!