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Progress Notes

I bet everyone reading this column has heard of HIPAA and can mention several ways it has impacted their work life. The federal requirements to protect an individual's health information are extensive. They apply to PHI (protected health information) in any form: verbal, hard copy, electronic, and images (like photos or videos). It is really, really important that we all be very careful when working with patients and their information that we don't share that information with anyone who does not really need to know.

I write today to alert you to two ways in which people violate HIPAA, perhaps without thinking about it or perhaps thinking it will not be noticed. For instance, intentionally viewing someone's medical record without a clinical reason for doing so violates ECU Physician policies. Such a violation can and has resulted in termination of the employee. Intentionally looking at such a record even once is a clear violation of federal law. This is not the same as pulling up the wrong record, recognizing it, and closing down that record; we know that happens and is part of working with electronic records. If you are not familiar with our policies, please review them at <http://www.ecu.edu/hipaa/>. At ECU Physicians and the Brody School of Medicine, we take the HIPAA policies very seriously. Allegations of policy violation are carefully investigated and often lead to disciplinary measures. Please safeguard the PHI of your patients fully!

The second way that people violate HIPAA is to place PHI on any drive that is not encrypted or on an ECU server designated for saving PHI (such as the servers used for Centricity and HealthSpan). Sometimes a nurse or physician saves PHI on many patients to their own hard drive or a flash drive for use in research or quality improvement activities. It is vital that the drive be encrypted. From time to time, flash drives get lost or mislaid. If there is unencrypted PHI on the drive, that is a HIPAA violation. These alleged violations are investigated carefully and may lead to disciplinary measures with the person responsible for the drive. It is pretty easy to encrypt a flash drive using the freeware TrueCrypt (www.truecrypt.org/downloads). That is the software I use on my flash drive (even though there is no PHI on the drive). Please encrypt your drives!

It is important to remember that if a HIPAA violation occurs, we may be required by law to report that violation and disclosure of PHI to the patient(s) involved. Depending on the type of violation and the number of patients, this can be a complicated process. But think of it as if it were your information. Would you want that to be shared with anyone not directly involved with your care or the billing process for your care?

What is PHI (Protected Health Information)?

1. Name
2. Any address information more specific than the state; thus street address, city, zip code, etc.
3. Birth date, or date of hospital admission or discharge
4. Telephone numbers
5. Fax numbers
6. Email address
7. Social Security Number
8. Medical Record number
9. Insurance policy number
10. Billing account number
11. Certificate or licensure number (like a medical license or driver's license)
12. Vehicle identifiers, serial numbers, license plate numbers
13. Biometric identifiers, like fingerprints, retinal scans and other physical characteristics that identify a person
14. Full face photos

The privacy of our patients' information is vital. Patients place great trust in their providers and the staff that work with their providers. It is our job to preserve that trust. Thanks.

*Nicholas Benson, MD, MBA
Medical Director, ECU Physicians
Vice Dean*

Word to the Wise

"Some men see things as they are and say, "Why?" I dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?"

- George Bernard Shaw

Top Nurse Chosen At Medical School

ECU PHYSICIANS



Nominees



Donna Lou Edwards
Nurse Specialist
Department of
Cardiovascular Sciences



Angela Merritt
Nurse Specialist
Department of
Psychiatric Medicine



Richard Lambert
Nurse Manager
Department of
Cardiovascular Sciences



Christina Moser
Nurse Manager
Department of Surgery



Natalie McKeel
Nurse Manager
Department of Family Medicine



Kim Winstead
Nurse Specialist
Department of
Obstetrics and Gynecology

A cardiovascular nurse has been named the best in her field for 2010 at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its medical group practice, ECU Physicians.

Susan DeAntonio, a nurse manager in the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, is the 2010 ECU Physicians Nurse of the Year. She has worked at the medical school since 2003.

A native of Williamston and a graduate of Bear Grass High School, DeAntonio described her job as "kind of like air traffic control for the day", getting patients where they need to go, making sure physician orders are handled correctly and helping where help is needed.

Two of her cardiovascular co-workers were also nominated, and DeAntonio said all nominees were excellent nurses. "I was pulling for them, hoping they would win," she said. "It's quite an honor to be chosen."

DeAntonio routinely asks patients what the staff can do to improve patient visits. She takes this information and works with other clinical and administrative managers to incorporate new customer service strategies in an effort to meet customer expectations.

"One of Susan's primary goals for her staff is to provide outstanding quality patient care and be proud of the fact that patients we treat are getting the best nursing care possible," said Dr. Drillious Gay, nursing administrator in the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences. "It is not uncommon to find Susan working side-by-side with her staff assisting and teaching them on a daily basis. She rolls her sleeves up and jumps in, especially when her staff is dealing with difficult situations."

In addition to her nursing duties, DeAntonio helped organize this year's Wear Red for Women event – an effort that won her and her team a 2010 ECU Centennial Award for Excellence.

"I work with such great people every day and learn something new every day," she said.

DeAntonio is the daughter of Betsy and Ralph Holliday of Williamston and Aubrey and Myra Gibbs of Washington. She is a graduate of Pitt Community College and ECU. Six other nurses were also finalists for the award, which was announced at a June 3 banquet.

*Contributed by Doug Boyd
ECU Health Sciences New Services*

ECU Among the Nation's Best for in Vitro Fertilization

East Carolina University has one of the nation's most successful programs for helping women become pregnant through in vitro fertilization.

At ECU Women's Physicians, 68.8 percent of embryo transfers resulted in live births for women under 35 during 2008, according to the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology, which collects fertility clinic data nationwide. Nationally, the average success rate in 2008 for women 35 and younger was 47.3 percent, according to SART. ECU had an overall success rate of 56 percent for all women undergoing IVF regardless of age.

That success rate ranked ECU fourth in the country and first in North Carolina for 2008. In North Carolina, the next best success rate was at Wake Forest University and the nation's top fertility clinic that year was in Houston. There are nearly 500 IVF centers in the U.S.

"We've had an established program that has concentrated on continued quality improvement and higher pregnancy rates," said Dr. Cal Hayslip, medical director of reproductive endocrinology and infertility services at ECU. "In the past year, some of that hard work has been realized."

ECU's program began in 1993. In 2008, the most recent year for which figures are available, a total of 81 women underwent IVF treatment at ECU. More information about ECU's in vitro fertilization services is online at <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/ecuphysicians/women/infertility.cfm>. More information about SART and IVF clinic success rates are online at <http://fertilitysuccessrates.com>.

This story originally appeared in the June 25, 2010 issue of Pieces of Eight.

Nutrition Awareness and Solutions Recognition

A team working on nutrition at University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina recently won statewide recognition.

At its 12th annual meeting and awards ceremony, N.C. Prevention Partners joined leaders from the health, hospital, school and business communities to honor leaders who make it easier for North Carolinians to reduce tobacco use, eat healthier and get more physical activity.

Among the honorees was Kathy Kolasa, Ph.D., consultant to the UHS nutrition initiative and head of nutrition and education services in the family medicine department at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University.

Kolasa received the Jim Long Lifetime Achievement Award for her extraordinary leadership to bring nutrition awareness and nutrition solutions to North Carolinians.

Joining Kolasa at the awards ceremony were other team members working on the UHS nutrition initiative. The Long award honors the team's efforts in improving the availability of healthful foods on UHS campuses, Kolasa said.

"This award really celebrates the work the UHS team is doing to ensure UHS hospital employees and visitors have access to healthy, affordable foods, 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Kolasa said.

Kolasa has been affiliated with UHS, Pitt County Memorial Hospital and the Brody School of Medicine since the early 1980s. She served on the N.C. Health and Wellness Trust Fund's Study Committee on Childhood Obesity and has won several awards for her work.

N.C. Prevention Partners honored several UHS hospitals during the event. Bertie Memorial, Chowan Roanoke-Chowan and The Outer Banks Hospital were among Red Apple Hospitals, recognized for their commitment to providing nutritious food to patients, staff and visitors.

Chowan was also one of nine hospitals to earn the Gold Star award for referring patients to the N.C. Quitline, a smoking cessation hotline.

The work of Kolasa and other award winners is making it easier for North Carolina's citizens to access healthy food options said Meg Molloy, president and CEO of N.C. Prevention Partners.

"One of the best ways to accelerate the pace at which good, healthy policies happen - such as creating a healthy food environment in cafeterias and vending machines - is by recognizing and sharing the success stories that make them possible," Molloy said. "We are proud to honor today's recipients - their work is making it easier for every North Carolinian to make healthy choices."

Other award winners included the Mt. Airy City Schools, Wake Forest University-Baptist Medical Center, N.C. Rep. Douglas Y. Yongue of Scotland County and 66 hospitals honored for healthy food offerings and smoking cessation programs.

This story originally appeared in the June 4, 2010 issue of People.



UHS nutrition initiative team members include (left to right) Rose Ann Simmons, adult programs specialist at VIQuest; Kay Craven, nutrition specialist in the department of family medicine at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU; Kathy Kolasa, head of nutrition and education services in the family medicine department at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU; Scottie Gaskins, HealthAccess senior administrator; and Russell Currie of Aramark/PCMH.



*Contributed by Jimmy Ryals
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Servire Society

During East Carolina University’s Founder Day–University Awards event on April 27, 2010, members of the Servire Society, which began in 2008, were inducted. The university’s motto is Servire, which means to serve.

Members must perform a minimum of 100 hours public service during a year.

The following members of the ECU Brody School of Medicine family who were recognized at this years Founders Day/University Awards Day ceremony.

UNC Board of Governors Distinguished Professors for Teaching Awards:

Dr. Gary I. Levine, Associate Professor, Department of Family Medicine, Brody School of Medicine

ECU Scholar-Teacher Awards:

Dr. David Collier, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Brody School of Medicine

Dr. Keith Nelson, Associate Professor, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Brody School of Medicine

Dr. Robert J. Tanenberg, Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Brody School of Medicine

Faculty Receiving US Patents:

George Sigounas, Department of Medicine, U.S. Patent # 7,531,501 for Method of Treating Endothelial Injury

Spirit:

Wear Red Team. Members: Martina Christie, Lab Compliance Coordinator, ECU Physicians; Debi Crotts, Marketing Coordinator for the Division of Health Sciences; Martha Dartt, Director of Nursing, ECU Physicians; Susan De Antonio, Nurse Manager, East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU; Carolyn Erwin, Administrator, ECU Physicians; Drillious Gay, Nurse Administrator, East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU; Donna McDonald, Associate Director, Multimedia and Technology Services, Laupus Library; Karen Warren, Director of Campus Wellness.

Servire Society Inductees

Faculty 1st year inductees:

- Kathryn Kolasa

Faculty 2nd year inductees:

- Harry G. Adams

Staff 2nd year inductees:

- Lynn Tuthill

Staff 3rd year inductees:

- William C. Edwards



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Survivor Day



Cancer survivors Sylvene Spickerman, left, and Cherry Turnage, right, join hands with laughter yoga therapist Rhonda Locklair during the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center Survivor Day on June 24 at the Brody School of Medicine.

Photo by Doug Boyd



Becky Mozingo shares a laugh with cancer survivor Cherry Turnage during a laughter yoga presentation at the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center Survivor Day on June 24 at the Brody School of Medicine.

Photo by Doug Boyd



Laughter yoga therapist Rhonda Locklair “takes a double dose of happy pills” during the Leo W. Jenkins Cancer Center Survivor Day on June 24 at the Brody School of Medicine.

Photo by Doug Boyd