I. Purpose Statement
To establish the procedures to which all Brody School of Medicine (BSOM) faculty, physicians, employees, and learners must adhere when receiving media requests for information about specific patients and/or for protected health information (PHI) to ensure full and continuing compliance with HIPAA policies.

II. Policy Statement
No one shall provide any PHI to the media, including whether or not the patient is hospitalized and the location of the patient. All media requests must be directed to the ECU News Services. The ECU HIPAA Privacy Office may become involved if it is deemed appropriate.

Disclosure of any PHI to the media without prior written authorization of the patient or patient’s legal representative will constitute a potential HIPAA violation necessitating an investigation in accordance with ECU HIPAA Privacy Policy 0002. Sanctions will be imposed based on the results of the investigation.

III. Definitions
A. PHI - Information created by or received from a health care provider, health plan, or employer that relates to the past, present, or future physical or mental condition of an individual, the provision of health care services to an individual, or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care services, and that identifies the individual or there is a reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify the individual.

This includes whether or not a patient is in the hospital or clinic and the location of a patient in the hospital or clinic.
Title: Media Requests for Patient Information

Section No. 2 C18 Section Name: Clinical

 Approval Date: 08/24/06; 12/14/12; 06/12/15
 Approval: Paul R.G. Cunningham, MD, FACS

B. Media – any person(s) representing newspaper, television, radio, blogger, online publication, or the like seeking a response from a faculty member, physician, employee, or learner.

C. Patient – for the purpose of this policy, patient is defined as any person who has received or is currently receiving health care in the Brody School of Medicine, by ECU Physicians, or by any individual clinical faculty in another facility. This also includes patients who are deceased.

IV. Procedures

A. Any faculty member, physician, employee, or learner who receives a request (phone call, mail, e-mail or in person) from the media, at any time and any location such as a home telephone, should contact the ECU News Services as soon as possible.

   1. The faculty member, physician, employee, or learner must tell the requester that “Healthcare privacy laws do not allow me to respond to any questions or requests for specific patient information. Please contact the ECU News Services.”

B. The ECU News Services will discuss the request with the media and advise the media of Federal and State laws as well as local policies governing confidentiality of health information.

C. The ECU News Services will notify the ECU HIPAA Privacy Office that the media is requesting PHI from a BSOM faculty member, physician, employee, or learner.

D. If a valid written authorization from the patient or legal representative is received and it is considered appropriate to release any patient specific health information, the ECU News Services will provide support to the faculty member, physician, employee, or learner during the interview with the media.

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Recommending Body: ECU Physicians Board of Directors

Signature: Contact Person/Reference Source: Chief Institutional Integrity Officer/ECU HIPAA Privacy Officer

Date: Extension: 744-5200

Effective Date: 08/24/06; 01/01/13; 07/01/15

Revision/Review Date: 06/12/15

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E. Any unauthorized or questionable release of PHI will be forwarded to the ECU HIPAA Privacy Officer for investigation under the ECU HIPAA Privacy Policy 0002.