

LGBT Veteran Privacy Reminder

We place great importance on the confidentiality and security of our patients' information. These reminders are designed to refresh your memory about your role in information privacy and security. If you have questions or concerns related to information privacy, please contact:

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Medical professionals generally agree that patients receive better medical care when they are able to be honest and open with their healthcare providers. Information about sexual orientation and gender identity is an essential part of any medical history. Comfortable dialogue about a patient's identity and relationships can help focus and generate an overall higher quality of care. However, studies have shown that many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons are reluctant to discuss their sexual orientation or gender identity with their health care providers out of fear of ridicule, abandonment of care, or improper disclosure of their sexual orientation or health status to third parties. HIPAA protects the privacy of individually identifiable health information, including information related to a person's LGBT status. Because information about a patient's sexual orientation and gender identity is often very relevant, and sometimes absolutely crucial to the provision of healthcare, it is protected by the federal privacy rules. Information regarding a patient's transgender status, such as diagnosis, medical history, birth-assigned sex, or anatomy, constitute protected health information. Such information should not be disclosed to anyone—including family, friends, and other patients—without the patient's consent. This information should also not be disclosed to medical facility personnel unless there is a medically relevant reason to do so. If this information is shared solely for purposes of gossip or harassment, it is a violation of HIPAA. Do your part to protect patient information . . . think HIPAA! Sources: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services; National Center for Transgender Equality.



Joseph Picklo



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