

Privacy & Confidentiality of Medical Information

The Student Health Center is committed to maintaining patient privacy and confidentiality. Unless required by law, subpoena, court order, or required reports to the Public Health Department, the SHC doesn't release individual medical information without the authorization/consent of the patient.

The Student Health Center does not share patient medical information with family members, faculty, university administrators or others who are not the healthcare professionals involved in the patient's care unless the patient has formally authorized us to do this. In rare circumstances and only as allowed by law, the SHC may share medical information without patient authorization if the treating clinician determines that not doing so would present significant danger to the patient or to others.

In accordance with privacy laws and ethical practice, the SHC also restricts access to individual medical information within the SHC to staff who are involved in the provision of the patient's medical care on a *minimum necessary - need to know* basis. Similarly, the Student Health Center might share pertinent medical information with a hospital emergency room or another physician when we refer the patient to them for medical care.

The SHC does not release medical records sent to us from other medical providers. Patients should direct their requests for the release of such information to the physician or healthcare entity that provided the medical care that created the information the patient wants released.

The patient's informed consent to release medical information is legally limited to circumstances that have already taken place. Consent can't be given in advance to release information about circumstances that have not yet happened. A patient may terminate her/his previous consent to release medical information at any time. This must be done in writing. It is not possible for this termination to apply to records that have already been released as authorized. The Student Health Center does not bill third parties, so medical information is not released for this purpose.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) privacy rules require health care providers to define and communicate the methods used to safeguard private medical information. The legal department of the California State University System has determined that many HIPAA procedures don't apply to SSU Student Health Center services as currently provided, but other more stringent state and federal privacy laws do apply, and the Student Health Center follows these regulations as well as many HIPAA based privacy and security safeguards.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the confidentiality of student educational records on campus. Under FERPA, California medical privacy laws apply to information and records the Student Health Center develops and maintains for patient diagnosis and treatment purposes. However, under FERPA, any medical records that students authorize to have released to campus entities outside the SHC for non-treatment purposes become the responsibility of the recipient and are protected by FERPA only as educational but not medical diagnosis/treatment records. In this circumstance, the confidentiality protections under FERPA, though stringent, could allow further access to campus entities that are not a student's medical or mental health providers.

If you have questions, please contact us at **707 664-2921**.