

## Privacy & Confidentiality of Medical Information

The SSU Student Health Center (SHC) is committed to maintaining patient privacy and confidentiality. Unless required by law, subpoena, court order, or public health reporting requirements, the SHC does not release medical records without the authorization and consent of the patient to whom the records pertain.

The Student Health Center does not share individual medical information with parents, family members, university faculty, staff, administrators or others without the written authorization of the patient. In rare circumstances, the SHC may legally share medical information without patient consent if the treating clinician determines that not doing so would present significant danger to the patient or others.

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

In accordance with privacy laws and ethical practice, the SHC also restricts access to private medical information within the SHC to those SHC staff that need the information to participate in the provision of effective medical care to the patient. In such cases, the information is shared on a *minimum necessary* - *need to know* basis. Similarly, the Student Health Center might share some medical information with a hospital emergency room or another physician when we refer a patient to that entity for medical care.

A patient may terminate a previous consent to release medical information at anytime. This must be in writing and doesn't apply to records that have already been released under the previous authorization. The Student Health Center does not bill third parties, so medical information is not released by us for this purpose. The patient's informed consent to otherwise release medical information is limited to medical circumstances that have already taken place and known to the patient at the time of consent.

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 HIPAA procedures don't apply to Student Health Center services as currently provided to SSU students. However, State privacy laws do apply.

The California medical privacy laws are equally or more stringent than HIPAA confidentiality protections and apply to Student Health Center records developed and retained for patient diagnosis and treatment purposes. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the confidentiality of most student educational records on campus. Under FERPA, medical records released with your authorization to SSU entities outside the SHC for other than medical diagnosis and treatment purposes become FERPA protected educational records. Keep this in mind when considering asking us to release medical records to other campus entities that are not providing your health care, since confidentiality protections under FERPA, though stringent, do not limit access to only the medical professionals involved in your treatment.

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