

# THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU "SNOOP"

*An important reminder from UConn Health's Privacy Office*



A patient has been tested for COVID-19 and you want to know where they live and the result of the test.

You want to learn about a patient's symptoms and how they are being treated but you are not on the patient's Care Team.

The media reported that an accident victim or public figure is here and you are curious.

Your neighbor has been visiting one of our clinics and you are concerned.

Your coworker is on medical leave and you want to get information so you can help.

As UConn Health employees, you may find yourself in these or similar situations. Remember that we are prohibited from intentionally accessing or viewing anyone's confidential information when we do not have a job-related reason to do so. Doing so is considered "snooping" and disciplinary actions can be severe, up to and including termination from your position at UConn Health.

## REASONS TO AVOID "SNOOPING"

### It Violates HIPAA Note:

**Note: The current coronavirus pandemic does NOT change, waive, or relax HIPAA in any way.**

The HIPAA Privacy Rule and UConn Health's policies require that we access, use or disclose only the minimum necessary amount of protected health information (PHI) to complete a work-related duty, and that we do so only when the PHI is needed for that specific task.

Workforce members may not access medical information of patients, family, friends, co-workers, students or others *unless* it is required for a specific work-related responsibility.

#### Confidentiality is a Patient Right and Expectation

At UConn Health we take the privacy of our patients' information very seriously. Patients have the right to have their information kept confidential and expect us to protect their records against unauthorized access. Our patients' trust in UConn Health is critical to our mission.

#### Your Activity is Monitored

UConn Health's Privacy Office actively monitors access to patient records. High-profile and other cases are monitored to make sure that everyone who accesses a patient's record is doing so appropriately. Investigations are initiated when suspicious activity or potential snooping situations are identified or reported.

#### Consequences can be Severe

As noted above, sanctions for snooping can include disciplinary actions up to and including termination from your position at UConn Health. You also can be prosecuted in your individual capacity under civil and criminal law.



Questions If you have any questions, need guidance, or need to report potential snooping, please contact:

#### UConn Health's Privacy Office

Phone: 860-679-7226

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