Sonoma State University Student Health Center
Privacy & Confidentiality of Medical Information

The Sonoma State University Student Health Center is committed to maintaining patient privacy and confidentiality. Unless required by law, subpoena, or court order, the Student Health Center does not release medical records without the consent of the patient to whom the records pertain.

Moreover, in accordance with privacy laws and ethical practice, we restrict access to private medical information (whether in oral, paper, or electronic form) to those who need such information to provide effective medical care to a particular patient. In such cases, information is used and shared on a minimum necessary - need to know basis – such as when information is shared with health care providers and SSU Student Health Center staff who are collaboratively involved in the treatment of the particular patient. For example, the Student Health Center might share individual medical information with a hospital emergency room or another physician when we refer a patient for medical care.

The Student Health Center does not ordinarily 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 Student Health Center may legally share medical information without patient consent, if the patient’s doctors determine that not doing so would present significant danger to the patient or others.

The patient may not authorize the release of such information in advance and the patient may terminate a previously signed authorization at anytime. Such termination must be in writing and cannot apply to records already released under the previous authorization. The Student Health Center does not release medical records we have received from other medical providers. Students should direct their authorizations 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.

Federal 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. If you have visited your private physician or used a local hospital or clinic, you may have received information about HIPAA.

The legal department of the California State University System has advised the Sonoma State University Student Health Center that HIPAA requirements and procedures do not apply to the services student health centers provide to CSU students, because other stringent federal and state privacy laws apply, particularly the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the State of California Medical Information Act. Confidentiality protections in FERPA and California State law are equally or more comprehensive than protections in HIPAA, although specific procedures or paperwork are sometimes different.

If you have questions about the privacy and confidentiality medical information at the Student Health Center or Student Health Center services, please contact us at 707 664-2921.