



PRISMA HEALTH–UPSTATE COMMUNICATION AND HAND-OFFS POLICY (POLICY NUMBER S-050-57)

The Prisma Health–Upstate Manual of Medical Staff Policies and the Medical Staff Patient Management Policy outline patient management and safety methodologies, which include the following communication and hand-offs expectations, to which residents are expected to adhere:

1. Practitioners are expected to communicate information to all others involved in patient’s care in a clear and timely manner, whether the communication is verbal or written.
2. All communication among caregivers is expected to be collegial and professional, in keeping with the Medical Staff and Prisma Health–Upstate Code of Conduct Policies.
3. When hand-offs occur between practitioners (physicians and/or Advanced Practice Practitioners), such as sign-outs, sign-ins, call coverage changes and transfers of care from one practitioner to another, the following processes should be part of the hand-off:
 - a. The communication should be interactive to afford the opportunity for questioning and clarification of information between the parties. If written or electronic communication is used, there should be an opportunity for either party to clarify any confusing or conflicting information (e.g. contact information to reach the author or other person who can provide clarification).
 - b. Sufficient information must be conveyed to transfer responsibility of the care of the patient safely. At minimum, pertinent up-to-date information regarding the diagnosis, condition and treatment of the patient and any anticipated changes should be conveyed. Any necessary interventions, treatment plans or anticipated testing results should also be communicated.
 - c. If the hand-off is for routine matters, repeating back the information is not necessary; however, if the situation is emergent or if there is information that is critical to patient care, confirming or repeating back that information should be considered.
 - d. Ideally, the hand-off process should be as free as possible from interruptions so as to minimize the chance of failure to convey important information. Answering pages and performing other duties during hand-offs should be kept to a minimum.



ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Prisma Health–Upstate provides electronic communications to its employees to assist and facilitate business communications and respects the privacy of users. Nonetheless, subject to the requirements for authorization, Prisma Health–Upstate may deny access to electronic services and may retrieve, inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic information when required by law, when there is reason to believe that violations of policy or law have taken place, or, in exceptional cases, when required to meet time dependent, critical operational needs.

Keep in mind that the Company owns any electronic communications sent by or on company equipment. Management and other authorized staff have the right to access any material in a resident's/fellow's email or on his/her computer at any time. Please do not consider electronic communication, storage or access to be private if it is created or stored at work.

Whenever you login to a Prisma Health–Upstate PC with your user id, you are responsible for the protection of that PC including any patient information (HIPAA), financial information or other sensitive information you have access rights to.

Be Safe With Your Computer, remember (where appropriate):

- Lock your Prisma Health–Upstate PC when walking away.
- Lock you Prisma Health–Upstate PC or logout when you leave for the day.
- Always transport your laptop in the trunk of your vehicle and never in plain sight.
- Never leave your laptop unattended.

I. Definition

Electronic communications include, but are not limited to, e-mail, voicemail, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), and other forms of electronic communications media.

II. Specific Prohibitions:

- Impersonating other individuals in communication, e.g., forging e-mail.
- Using electronic media for any form of solicitation.
- Using electronic media to broadcast personal messages to groups or individuals.
- Transmitting sensitive, proprietary or protected health information (PHI) to unauthorized persons or organizations.

- Transmitting of threatening, harassing, obscene, or offensive material.
- Creating or forwarding chain letters.
- Conducting any illegal activity or any activity which could adversely affect the company.
- Sharing company confidential information outside of company without authorization.
- Conducting personal business using company computer or email.

III. System Security:

- User should choose strong passwords to minimize unauthorized use.
- PHI information transmitted outside of Prisma Health–Upstate must be encrypted.
- Application of Mobile Iron required on all electronic devices.

COMMUNICATION DEVICE

Each year communication devices will be provided for all incoming residents and fellows. Sensible use and appropriate protection of the unit is recommended. Damage to communication devices may result in replacement of the communication device at cost to the Resident/Fellow. Residents/fellows leaving before completion of training will be required to return the device to the Office of Graduate Medical Education via their program coordinator.

Prevent Loss or Theft of Protected Health Information

A growing number of health care facilities, employers, government agencies and other organizations have acknowledged that the protected health information (PHI) of thousands of patients' information has been stolen or lost. Many times such loss or theft occurs when PHI is stored on a laptop or other mobile electronic device that is removed from a healthcare facility and left unattended in an automobile.

Storing PHI on a laptop or other mobile device and removing it from Prisma Health–Upstate premises is prohibited unless necessary to perform job functions. In no case should PHI be removed from a Prisma Health–Upstate office, hospital, physician practice or other Prisma Health–Upstate location unless the information is encrypted or password protected. Even if the PHI is encrypted or password protected, do not leave laptops or mobile electronic devices in an unattended automobile. Even locked automobiles may be burglarized.

Patient Care Text Messaging/Internet Emailing Prohibited

Text messaging/internet emailing any protected health information (PHI) over



company-issued or other electronic devices are not permitted at Prisma Health–Upstate. Texting/internet emailing features are not secured through the corporate network; therefore, any text/internet email communications of PHI risk HIPAA violations and patient safety. Employees’ communications using corporate resources may be monitored for violation of text messaging/internet emailing PHI. Patient consults should be conducted from physician to physician and not through staff texting/internet emailing and verbal communications to residents.

If you have questions about this policy, please discuss it with your supervisor. If you have questions about encrypting or password-protecting portable devices, please contact Information Services at 455-8000.

GME Communication Devices Directives

iPhones

1. Using the designated Education Allowance Funds (CME), incoming Resident/Fellows will be provided an Apple iPhone – 32GB.
2. Educational funds may not be used for the purchase of any phones.
3. Using your phone outside of the USA requires that you contact Prisma Health–Upstate Telecommunications at least a week before you leave the USA to set up a Global Plan on your phone. You will be responsible for all voice/data/messaging charges incurred while out of the country.
4. Telephone upgrades that result in a service contract longer than the term of the resident’s/fellow’s employment will be the responsibility of the residents/fellows to resolve by termination or continuation under a different plan with the service carrier.

Electronic Education Technology

Individual education allowance funds are available for Resident/Fellow physicians for the purchase of iPads for education technology. The iPad technology will be used for email and continuing education. Any specific licenses for possible clinical data access will be the responsibility of the Resident/Fellow physician and must be coordinated through Prisma Health–Upstate Information Services. Any financial difference between authorized education allowance funds and purchase price(s) is the responsibility of the Resident/Fellow physician. Any applicable service plans are wholly the responsibility of the Resident/Fellow. The opportunity to use the individual Education Allowance Fund is at the discretion of the respective Program Director.

Passwords

All Medical Students/Residents/Fellows are expected and required to activate and monitor individual passwords for ALL communication devices in accordance with Prisma Health–Upstate Policy S-025-01: Protection of Data on Portable Devices and Removable Media.



Purchasing

Residents/fellows are restricted to upgrade telephone purchases and/or iPad purchases through Prisma Health–Upstate Information Services only. Residents may not purchase such devices from third party vendors and get reimbursement.