

# De-Identification of Protected Health Information under the HIPAA Privacy Rule

## **RATIONALE**

Health information, when not individually identifiable, has utility including the facilitation of student learning. The De-Identification of Protected Health Information under the HIPAA Privacy Rule policy (Policy) allows Palmer College of Chiropractic (College) to use and disclose health information after proper de-identification. Proper de-identification modifies health information so that it neither identifies nor provides a reasonable basis to identify an individual. Health information that is de-identified is no longer protected health information (PHI) and therefore not subject to the Privacy Rule requirements for use and disclosure.

## **PURPOSE**

A Palmer College of Chiropractic Health Care Component (PCC HCC) unit may use PHI to create de-identified information, whether or not the de-identified information is to be used by the PCC HCC unit or disclosed to another entity or individual, without authorization.

A PCC HCC unit (hereafter referred to as “department”) may disclose PHI to a business associate in order to create de-identified information, whether or not the de-identified information is to be used by the PCC HCC department or disclosed to another entity or individual, without authorization. Additional requirements apply before disclosing PHI to a business associate (see Institutional Policy, Managing Arrangements of Business Associates with Palmer College of Chiropractic).

## **SCOPE**

This Policy applies to the entire College community, which is defined as including the Davenport campus (Palmer College Foundation, d/b/a Palmer College of Chiropractic), West campus (Palmer College of Chiropractic West) and Florida campus (Palmer College Foundation, Inc., d/b/a Palmer College of Chiropractic Florida) and any other person(s), groups, or organizations affiliated with any Palmer campus.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purposes of this Policy, the following terms shall have the meanings specified below:

- > The term “**business associate**” refers to a person or entity not affiliated with Palmer College of Chiropractic that performs or assists in performing for or on behalf of any unit in the Palmer College of Chiropractic Health Care Component, business support functions/services that involve the use of Protected Health Information.
- > The term “**College**” refers to Palmer College of Chiropractic, including operations on the Davenport campus; West campus; and Florida campus.
- > The term “**College community**” refers to all students, faculty, staff (including administration), and any other person(s), groups, or organizations affiliated with any Palmer campus.
- > The term “**protected health information**” (PHI) refers to information, including demographic information, which relates to the individual’s past, present or future physical or mental health or condition; the provision of health care to the individual; or the past, present or future payment for the provision of health care to the individual, and that identifies the individual or for which there is a reasonable basis to believe can be used to identify the individual. PHI includes many common identifiers (e.g. name, address, birthdate, Social Security number) when such can be associated with the health information listed above. PHI does not include student records held by educational institutions or employment records held by employers. However, this information is still treated confidentially under other applicable laws.
- > The term “**Palmer College of Chiropractic Health Care Component**” (PCC HCC) refers to those health care units of Palmer College Foundation and Palmer College of Chiropractic West that have been designated as part of its health care component. For more information, refer to the Institutional Policy “Designation of the Palmer College of Chiropractic Health Care Component”.

## **AUTHORIZATION**

Only Privacy Officers or their authorized designees may de-identify PHI.

## **DE-IDENTIFICATION OF PHI**

A PCC HCC department may determine that health information is de-identified only if the requirements set forth in sections A or B below are met. The Privacy Officer must give written approval for de-identification and certifies de-identification is complete.

The following identifiers of the individual or of relatives, employers, or household members of the individual are removed:

1. Name;
2. All geographic subdivisions smaller than a state, including street address, city, county, precinct, ZIP code, and their equivalent geocodes, except for the initial three digits of the ZIP code if, according to the current publicly available data from the Bureau of the Census;
  - a) The geographic unit formed by combining all ZIP codes with the same three initial digits contains more than 20,000 people; and
  - b) The initial three digits of a ZIP code for all such geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people is changed to 000 (Note the 17 restricted zip codes 3-digit prefix per HHS: 036, 692, 878, 059, 790, 879, 063, 821, 884, 102, 823, 890, 203, 830, 893, 556, 831; always check current records if there is an updated list on HHS).
3. All elements of dates (except year) for dates directly related to an individual, including birth date, admission date, discharge date, date of death, all ages over 89 and dates indicative of such age, except that such ages and elements may be aggregated into a single category of age 90 or older;
4. Telephone numbers;
5. Vehicle identifiers and serial numbers, including license plate numbers;
6. Fax numbers;
7. Device identifiers and serial numbers;
8. Email addresses;
9. Web Universal Resource Locators (URLs);
10. Social Security numbers;
11. Internet protocol (IP) addresses;
12. Medical record number;
13. Biometric identifiers, including finger and voice prints;

14. Health plan beneficiary numbers;
15. Full face photographic and any comparable images;
16. Account numbers
17. Any other unique identifying number, characteristic, or code, except as permitted by “Re-Identification” section of this Policy;
18. Certificate/license numbers; and
19. Any other information about which the PCC HCC department has actual knowledge that it could be used alone or in combination with other information to identify the individual.

A person with appropriate knowledge of and experience with generally accepted statistical and scientific principles and methods for rendering information not individually identifiable:

1. Applying such principles and methods, determines that the risk is very small that the information could be used, alone or in combination with other reasonably available information, by an anticipated recipient to identify an individual who is a subject of the information; and
2. Documents the methods and results of the analysis that justify such determination.

## **RE-IDENTIFICATION**

The PCC HCC department may assign a code or other means of record identification to allow information de-identified under this Policy to be re-identified by that PCC HCC department provided that:

1. Derivation. The code or other means of record identification is not derived from or related to information about the individual and is not otherwise capable of being translated so as to identify the individual; and
2. Security. The PCC HCC department does not use or disclose the code or other means of record identification for any other purpose, and does not disclose the mechanism for re-identification.

Disclosure of a code or other means of record identification, designed to enable coded or otherwise de-identified information to be re-identified, constitutes disclosure of PHI.

If de-identified information is re-identified, such re-identified information is PHI and the PCC HCC department may use or disclose such re-identified information only as permitted for PHI under the Privacy Rule.

## **STANDARD INSTITUTIONAL POLICY PROVISIONS**

Institutional policies are supplemented by provisions that are applicable to all institutional policies. It is the responsibility of all employees and students to know and comply with these standards.

- > [Standard Provisions Applicable to All Institutional Policies](#)

## **Additional Information**

### **ASSOCIATED POLICIES, PROCESSES AND/OR PROCEDURES**

This Policy is supplemented below. It is the responsibility of all employees and students to know and comply with policies and procedures as supplemented.

#### **POLICIES**

- > [Designation of the Palmer College of Chiropractic Health Care Component](#)
- > [Managing Arrangements of Business Associates with Palmer College of Chiropractic](#)

#### **PROCESSES AND/OR PROCEDURES**

- > N/A

#### **FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS**

- > N/A

#### **OTHER RELATED INFORMATION**

- > 45 CFR 164.502(d) (HIPAA Privacy Rule)
- > 45 CFR 164.514(a)-(c) (HIPAA Privacy Rule)

## CONTACTS

### *Privacy Officers*

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## HISTORY

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