Guidance on Identity Verification

HIPAA requires that we use caution in releasing patient information and this means that we must confirm that a request to release information is truly coming from the patient. In some cases, we may recognize a patient or a patient's voice, but in many cases we will not. A patient also may designate someone to pick up records on their behalf and we may need to confirm their identity. This document intends to provide guidance on steps that can be taken to confirm an individual's identity prior to releasing records. Note that in circumstances where we are confident it is the patient, such as when the request is made during check out from an appointment, no further confirmation would be needed.

In-person
- Photo- ID
- Driver's License
- Passport

Mail
- Signature validation: Compare the signature on the mailed request with the patient's signature on file in the medical record. Most patients will have signed having been offered the Notice of Privacy Practices and the signature is captured in the media tab in Epic.
- When possible, it is preferable to have the records mailed to the address on file for the patient.

Phone
- Request full name and at least two other identifiers such as date of birth, address, emergency contact name, phone number, last 4 digits of their social security number.
- Request most recent date of service or invoice number for billing questions.
- If the request is not from the patient but by someone who may have appropriate authority to make a request such as another treatment provider, ask that the request be made in writing on letterhead.
- If doubt persists, call the patient back using the phone number listed in the Epic.
- When the request is to mail records, the records should be sent to the address on file in Epic. Requests to send records to someone other than the patient must be in writing and properly validated, preferably with patient signature.

Email
- Address verification: email address must match that provided by the patient previously and listed in Epic. Note also, it is preferable to use secure file transfer for large sets of records rather than via email.
- When the request is to mail records, the records should be sent to the address on file in Epic. Requests to send records to someone other than the patient must be in writing and properly validated, preferably with patient signature.

10/18/16