



Avoidable HIPAA Violations

Some common HIPAA violations that individuals can avoid:

- A. **Failing to Verify Patient Identity:** Take the opportunity to review the protected health information (“PHI”) that is being given to patients or others to avoid improperly disclosing information to anyone who doesn’t have a need to know the information.
- B. **Dishonesty:** Accessing a patient’s file including the individual’s family members when there is not a business or medical purpose is dishonesty.
- C. **Gossip:** – The HIPAA privacy law is violated when individuals chat about patients with their work colleagues, friends or family, who are not privy to the patient’s medical information.
- D. **Hacking** – Individuals should be aware that hacking has become a norm and could be very costly for St. Luke’s if information is retrieved illegally. Individuals should follow St. Luke’s policy about changing passwords when required and reporting suspicious emails.
- E. **Improper Disposal:** This is an easy fix. Dispose of PHI in the appropriate locked shredded bins.
- F. **Unsecure Records:** In order to prevent theft and unauthorized access, HIPAA requires all electronic and paper documents or other files containing PHI to be stored in a secure area.
 - a. Do not leave PHI unattended (e.g., fax machine, nursing stations, or viewable in an individual’s car)
 - b. Log off computer when not in use. This can prevent possible identity theft.
- G. **Improper Disclosure:** St. Luke’s business partners should be HIPAA compliant and properly educated/trained if they access or handle PHI. These individuals can disclose St. Luke’s PHI to others by mistake.

Individuals, who violate HIPAA, will be subject to corrective action including termination of employment or contract.