

**Oklahoma Department of Corrections
Offender Palliative Care Volunteer Training
Patient Confidentiality Acknowledgement**

MSRM 140146.01

Attachment A

(5/14)

I. Introduction

As a palliative care volunteer, you may see and hear confidential information. You can get so accustomed to being around this kind of information that it's easy to forget how important it is to keep it private. Privacy is a basic right in our society. Safeguarding that right is your ethical obligation if you volunteer within the healthcare system.

II. What is Confidentiality

Patient confidentiality is a conscious effort by every healthcare worker and volunteer to keep private all personal information revealed by the patient while receiving healthcare. It may include the patients: identity, physical or psychological condition, and emotional status.

III. When Is Trust Broken

The bond of trust between the patient and healthcare staff and volunteers must not be broken or compromised in any way at any time. When patients do not trust healthcare workers or volunteers to protect their privacy, they may: Be hesitant to seek care and not divulge sensitive or vital information needed to provide proper care. Terrible consequences have resulted when healthcare workers and volunteers failed to protect patients' privacy. Failure to protect patient privacy has caused patients to: Lose jobs, suffer false rumors, become estranged from friends and family, and lose custody battles.

IV. Who Is Responsible

As a palliative care volunteer, you are obligated to protect patient confidentiality.

All palliative care volunteers are responsible for patient confidentiality. In general, those responsible include: Anyone who cares for and consults with patients; anyone who hears conversations about patients; anyone who has access to patient information.

V. Limiting Access

To protect confidentiality, medical information should be accessible only to those who "need to know" in order to deliver effective care.

Guidelines:

1. Only share patient information with other palliative care volunteers on a "need to know" basis. Never share written or spoken information.
2. Even a patient's family members may not be privy to patient information.
3. Never discuss confidential patient information where others can overhear your conversation such as hallways and elevators.
4. You are obligated to protect the privacy of a patient when you see a breach occurring. Report breaches of confidentiality to member of the palliative care team.

VI. Be On Guard

Your responsibility for protecting patient confidentiality doesn't end with your volunteer shift. Be on guard against divulging confidential information when in an informal atmosphere or social setting. If asked about confidential matters, a simple reply such as, "I'm sorry, that information is confidential," is appropriate.

VII. Summary

The care-giving relationship cannot be truly effective unless it is based on genuine trust. To fully meet the physical, emotional and psychological needs of the patients you care for, you must make protecting their confidentiality a key priority. Strict patient confidentiality will be observed.

I understand that any breach of confidentiality may result in immediate termination from the program.

Offender Volunteer's Signature _____ DOC # _____ Date _____