

## **What is HIPAA ?**

HIPAA stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996.

It was developed by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to protect medical records and other health information. These new standards provide patients with access to their medical records and more control over how their personal health information is used and disclosed. These federal standards took effect April 14, 2003.

## **What are the Specific Patient Protections ?**

- Patients generally should be able to see and obtain copies of their medical records and request corrections if they identify errors or mistakes.
- Health plans and health care providers must provide notice to their patients how they may use personal medical information. Patients must sign the notice of the new privacy regulations.
- Patients must provide written authorization of disclosure of health information
- These rules do not restrict the ability of health care providers to share health information needed to treat patients, ie between health disciplines
- All communications must be confidential
- All employees must have privacy protection training
- Health care information should not be readily accessible

(Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services Fact Sheet  
<http://www.hhs.gov/news/facts/privacy.html>)

## **What is the Nursing Student's Responsibility under HIPAA ?**

- Do not provide health care information to any individual until you know the patient's wishes regarding disclosure
- Protect all medical records ( chart, medication book, Kardex)
- Sign out of computer screens after working with sensitive information
- Discard all medical records in shredder
- Do not identify patients by name, initials, bed number or hospital. Your clinical paperwork must be completely anonymous.
- Do not discuss your patient's care in any public areas.