

Stark State College Dental Hygiene Program
WHAT IS HIPAA?

HHealth Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Federal law passed in 1996.

Health Insurance Reform: Intent is to insure working people have access to health insurance.

- Persons covered by a group health plan are guaranteed continued coverage if they change or lose jobs.
- Limits restrictions that can be placed because of pre-existing conditions.
- Renewal of health insurance is guaranteed, even if the person's health becomes worse.

Administrative Simplifications: Try to make items below easier for administrators in health care.

- Transaction Standards – Simplify and Standardize billing processes.
- Security Standards – Insure security of confidential or private medial information.
- **Privacy Standards – Gives the patients the right to control their Protected (personal) Health Information (PHI).**

Penalties:

Consequences of not following Stark State College Dental Hygiene Program policies related to HIPAA can include dismissal from the program.

Penalties for intentionally breaking the law may include fines and possible imprisonment.

How does HIPAA Affect students, faculty, and staff?

- All faculty and staff of the dental hygiene department are included in the definition of the workforce, and therefore must know and follow all policies and practices related to HIPAA.
- Students of all types are included in the HIPAA definition of the workforce, and therefore must know and follow all policies and practices related to HIPAA.
- Faculty and students have full access to patient information for treatment purposes while in treatment, but need to use information for school/learning purposes without identifying that particular patient.

Stark State College Dental Hygiene Program
PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Students, faculty, support staff, and professional guests are expected to treat any and all information obtained about individuals with a high level of sensitivity and confidentiality during and after their affiliation with Stark State College.

Information regarding medical status, mental health, past medical/dental history and personal information about students, faculty, staff and patients cannot be released or discussed in the presence of others, unless prior written consent is obtained from the individual. Student access to patient records is limited and used only for the purpose of providing quality dental hygiene care; faculty access is also permitted for teaching purposes.

Students, faculty, and staff must adhere to these guidelines when presenting case studies/reports in both the classroom and clinical setting. All parties are expected to be mindful of the above guidelines, so as to avoid speaking about individuals they have encountered, while in a laboratory, clinical or classroom setting or while engaged in casual conversation with others.

Any and all student records related to academics, current and/or past medical/dental health and immunization records are protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Academic records are kept within the department and health information is locked in the dental hygiene department chair's office. These records cannot be released without the written consent of the student.

We are committed to protecting the confidentiality of patients and students. Faculty, staff and students will receive training regarding privacy, in general and HIPAA policies, specifically. Violations of confidentiality will be handled by the Dental Hygiene Program Chair. All parties must acknowledge their review of related policies by signing the "Review of Privacy (HIPAA) and Confidentiality Policies and Procedures" document and must adhere to the following:

I. Patient Charts

- A. Access to records is limited to those who have a legitimate reason to review them.
- B. Patient information is used to provide dental hygiene care and for teaching purposes.
- C. Information regarding patients must never be released or discussed.
- D. Patient charts are to be filed as soon as possible. Charts to be filed are to be placed in the clinic chart filing cabinets. Charts should never be left in open areas or taken from the clinic facility.
- E. After sending radiographs to a private dentist, charts should be filed promptly.

II. Physician's Consultation Form

- A. All patient charts awaiting the return of a Medical Clearance Form must be filed in the clinic chart cabinet section reserved for such charts.

III. Clinic Computers

- A. Computers must be turned off at the end of each clinic session.

IV. Clinic Procedures

- A. When taking a Medical-Dental History, discussing informed consent and/or the dentist's exam and recommendations, students and faculty should speak in a low, private voice, if possible.

V. Appointment Procedures

- A. Students should respect the appointment contact/reminder preferences stated on the registration form.