Curriculum Development Centers Program

Awardee of The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Component 16-Professionalism/Customer Service in the Health Environment

Unit 5-Regulatory Issues: HIPAA and Standard Precautions

Unit 5: Objectives

- Characterize the importance of and guidelines associated with infection control
- Relate protecting yourself and others with standard precautions
- Explain HIPAA and communication

Infection Control

- The goal of infection control is to prevent the spread of infection
  - from you to others
  - from others to you
- There are many potential infectious agents in the healthcare setting
- Patients in particular are more vulnerable to infection and will have more serious consequences

Infection Control

- A patient who contracts an infection in the hospital is said to have an Hospital Acquired Condition (HAC)
- Insurers, such as Medicare and Medicaid, do not reimburse hospitals for the cost of caring for a patient with an HAC
- HACs are also a quality measure for healthcare organizations

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Infection Control

- Frequent hand washing is the most effective means of infection control in healthcare
- Proper technique is important for hand washing
- Be sure to take enough time -- repeat the alphabet to yourself twice
- Be sure to wash all surfaces on your hands, under your nails, and under rings

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Standard Precautions

- Standard Precautions -- all human blood/body fluids are to be treated as if they have blood-borne pathogens.
- If it's wet and came from a human, you should never touch it.
- Call for a staff member to arrange cleanup.
- If you have an exposure, get help right away. Tell the staff and follow their directions.

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HIPAA

- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)
- Signed into United States law in 1996
- A set of federal regulations
- Requirements affect the privacy of healthcare information

Important Components of HIPAA

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- Security Rule -- sets national standards for the security of electronic protected health information
- **Confidentiality provisions of the Patient Safety Rule -- protects identifiable information being used to analyze patient safety events and improve patient safety**

Important Components of HIPAA

- HIPAA also calls for civil and criminal penalties for not obeying the law.
- An individual and their employer can both be penalized with fines and possibly be put in jail.
- In the execution of your professional responsibilities, you will likely see or discuss actual patient data – keep this data to yourself.

HIPAA and Communication

- Intent of HIPAA
  - to protect patient privacy
  - to allow patients some control over their medical information
- It is NOT meant to interfere with communications that are required to provide medical care

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- **Be aware of what you are saying, who you are talking to, where you are, and who might be listening**

HIPAA Penalties

Be aware that in most organizations, inappropriately accessing patient data is an offense that will result in immediate termination from your job and possible criminal charges.

Summary

- **HIPAA has clear rules on the communication of patient data**
  - Never share your computer password or access codes
  - Log off when leaving your computer
  - Remove patient identifiers from data that you are using to solve IT problems
  - Be aware of your organization's specific policies on HIPAA and your professional role

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Summary

- Effective Infection control
  - Helps you avoid getting infections from others
  - Helps others avoid getting infections from you
  - Protects vulnerable patients from getting infections and becoming even more ill
  - Protects the healthcare organization from risk

Summary

- HIPAA is the law
- Violations can have severe consequences
- Consequences affect individuals and healthcare organizations
- Protect yourself and protect your organization by protecting patient privacy