



# PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH FACILITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
ALCOHOL, DRUG AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## Section - MEDICAL RECORDS

Effective: 4/6/2011

Policy- FAXING PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION #P9

Revised: 4/6/2011

PHF CEO's Approval

Date: 4/6/2011

Executive Medical Staff Chair's Approval

Date: 4/6/2011

Committee Chair's Approval

Date: 4/6/2011

Form Ref.

### POLICY:

It is the policy of the Santa Barbara County Mental Health Plan (SBC MHP) to comply with all state and federal laws, regulations, and contractual requirements, as well as relevant professional standards and practices, related to medical records.

In particular, it is the policy of the MHP that transmission of Protected Health Information (PHI) will conform to the privacy and security requirements of HIPAA.

### PROCEDURE:

#### A. SENDING FAXES CONTAINING PHI

1. Faxes which contain PHI must conform to the requirements for release of PHI.
2. Faxes which contain PHI include a HIPAA-compliant cover sheet approved by the Medical Records Administrator or Privacy Officer of the sender's agency.
3. ADMHS staff use the official ADMHS Fax Cover Sheet, which can be found in Microsoft Word templates, or an alternative form approved in advance by the ADMHS Medical Records Administrator.
4. Senders are responsible for ensuring that faxes which contain PHI are either sent to a fax machine located in a secure area, or that the intended recipient or designee is present at the fax machine to retrieve the fax immediately.
  - a. It is recommended that frequently-used fax numbers be programmed into fax machines to reduce the possibility of misdialing fax numbers.
  - b. ADMHS clinics and clinical programs, programs operated by CBO providers contracted by the MPH, and MHP-contracted network providers are required to have secure fax machines.
  - c. Before sending a fax containing PHI to a telephone number that is not regularly used, the sender must contact the intended recipient by telephone, fax, or e-mail to confirm that the fax machine is in a secure area, or that the recipient or designee is present at the fax machine to receive the PHI.

**B. RECEIVING FAXES CONTAINING PHI**

1. It is recommended that the recipient or designee verify that all pages have been received and are legible, and contact the sender as soon as possible if any pages were not received or are illegible.
2. Faxes containing PHI are treated in the same manner, and with the same security and confidentiality, as any other written PHI.

**C. TRANSMITTAL ERROR:**

1. When PHI is faxed and it is determined that the fax was sent to an incorrect fax machine, the following steps are taken immediately:
  - a. The sender contacts the actual recipient to inform him/her that the documents were transmitted in error.
  - b. The sender requests that the documents be destroyed (shredded) immediately.
  - c. The sender completes and submits an Unusual Occurrence Incident Report as soon as possible.