

## Uses & Disclosures of PHI

### Releases of Health Information to Schools - Frequently Asked Questions

Below are frequently asked questions, which can assist employees in understanding the appropriate protocols to follow in releasing patient protected health information to schools.

If you have additional questions or concerns related to releasing health information to schools, please contact the Office of Information Privacy and Security at 503 494-8849 or Health Information Services at 503 494-6290.

**Q:** Is a written authorization required prior to the release of medical records to schools?

**A:** Yes. OHSU must obtain a written authorization from the patient/patient's parent to release medical records to school. Please have the patient/parent sign an "Authorization to Use & Disclose Health Information" form available on the OHSU Integrity Office Policies and Forms page.

**Q:** Are there any circumstances where a written authorization is not required for releases to schools?

**A:** Yes. If the release of information is to a nurse or other provider at the school who is asking and needs the information solely for the treatment of the student, then an authorization is not needed. If the health information released to that provider will be used for any other purposes (i.e., educational or administrative planning), then an authorization is required. If in doubt seek a written authorization from the patient/patient's parent.

Immunization records about a student or prospective student required by state law for admission may be provided to the school with oral permission of a minor's parent/legal guardian or from the individual who is an adult or emancipated minor. Documentation of the permission in the health record is recommended.

**Q:** Short of obtaining a written authorization, are there any other ways to get health information to schools?

**A:** Yes. You may take a verbal request for the release of records from the patient/parent and send the health information directly to the patient/patient's parent. The patient/parent can then send this information as needed to the schools. If you follow this method, be sure to document that you released the records to the patient/parent in the patient's medical record.

**Q:** What if I just receive a phone call from a school asking for the immunization record of a patient?

**A:** This information can only be released without authorization if it is for treatment of the patient or released to the adult patient or to the parent/legal guardian of the minor patient.

Otherwise, please follow the steps above to either obtain authorization or to release information directly to the patient or the patient's parent (Question 3) or to the school with oral permission as noted in Question 2.

**Q:** Is there any other method that schools can use to obtain immunization records?

**A:** Yes. Schools may obtain immunization records directly through the Oregon State immunization registry (ALERT). This method does not require the direct involvement of OHSU.