



Sequoia Confidentiality Agreement for Interns / Volunteers / Observers

All information regarding Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC, its clients, staff and programs is considered confidential. It is expected that all interns, volunteers and observers will comply with this policy at all times. All client personal health information is protected under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Any unauthorized use of client personal health information is illegal under the HIPAA Act.

Additionally, no intern, volunteer or observer is allowed to take pictures or videos of any client at Sequoia Integrative Medical Services. Audio recording of any type is also prohibited.

Your signature below indicates that you understand these laws and policies and agree to comply with the law and policies at all times. If you have any questions regarding confidentiality please ask a director.

Attached is a copy of the HIPAA Staff Training, the Confidentiality Policy and Procedure and our Social Media Policy for you to review.

Print Name

Date

Signature

Sequoia Confidentiality Agreement 2021

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) required the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop regulations protecting the privacy and security of certain health information.¹ To fulfill this requirement, HHS published what are commonly known as the HIPAA [Privacy Rule](#) and the HIPAA [Security Rule](#).

The *Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information* (“Privacy Rule”) establishes, for the first time, a set of national standards for the protection of certain health information. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS”) issued the Privacy Rule to implement the requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (“HIPAA”).¹ The Privacy Rule standards address the use and disclosure of individuals’ health information—called “protected health information” by organizations subject to the Privacy Rule — called “covered entities,” as well as standards for individuals’ privacy rights to understand and control how their health information is used.

Within HHS, the Office for Civil Rights (“OCR”) has responsibility for implementing and enforcing the Privacy Rule with respect to voluntary compliance activities and civil money penalties.

A major goal of the Privacy Rule is to assure that individuals’ health information is properly protected while allowing the flow of health information needed to provide and promote high quality health care and to protect the public’s health and well being. The Rule strikes a balance that permits important uses of information, while protecting the privacy of people who seek care and healing. Given that the health care marketplace is diverse, the Rule is designed to be flexible and comprehensive to cover the variety of uses and disclosures that need to be addressed.

A major goal of the Security Rule is to protect the privacy of individuals’ health information while allowing covered entities to adopt new technologies to improve the quality and efficiency of patient care. Given that the health care marketplace is diverse, the Security Rule is designed to be flexible and scalable so a covered entity can implement policies, procedures, and technologies that are appropriate for the entity’s particular size, organizational structure, and risks to consumers’ e-PHI.

Who is affected?

All healthcare organizations from large health insurance providers to one physician offices.

Are there penalties for violation of HIPAA?

Yes there are penalties. Civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance up to \$25,000 for multiple violations of the same standard in a calendar year. Up to \$250,000 and/or 10 years imprisonment for knowing misuse of individually identifiable health information.

Sequoia Confidentiality Policy and Procedure

To preserve the dignity and privacy of Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC clients, to prevent the risk of client discrimination, and to prevent the risk of agency liability, confidentiality policies and procedures will be adhered to by all staff members, clinical students and volunteers. Client information will be disclosed to persons on a “need to know” basis according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) for the purpose of best serving the client’s needs.

1. At the time of hire all employees will receive training on HIPAA guidelines, and confidentiality policies and procedures.
 2. Confidentiality policies and procedures will be reviewed with all employees annually.
 3. **Client information will not be disclosed in a common area with any unnecessary persons in the room.**
 4. **Client information will not be disclosed to any other clients.**
 5. Client records will be stored in a designated, fireproof, water proof, locked area.
 6. Client records will be made available to authorized personnel only.
 7. Outside agency disclosure of client information will be provided only with informed written consent of the client according to HIPAA guidelines.
 8. Disclosures of information to outside agencies or persons will be kept on file according to HIPAA guidelines.
 9. All requests from outside agencies for client personal health information will be processed through the Privacy Officer according to HIPAA guidelines.
 10. When staff are unsure regarding an issue of confidentiality or a request for information, they are directed to Chad Weston Gardner, Director of Psychosocial Operations, for clarification.
 11. When leaving an office all staff are directed to close or put away any client personal health information.
 12. Front office staff are directed to be sure that no client personal health information is within eyesight of visitors.
 13. **Any document that contains any client information and needs to be discarded must be shredded.**
 14. **No photographs, video or recording of the clients or the facility is allowed.**
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Sequoia Policy and Procedures for Use of Social Media

Employees of Sequoia Integrative Medical Services are expected to present a professional and service-oriented image at all times including in the use of social media. Such use may include, but is not limited to, postings of images or content in online forums, blogs, microblogs, wikis or vlogs (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, health pages and blogs, media sites or similar types of online forums). The intent of this policy is not to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information, but to minimize potential unlawful harm to the Company, its employees and clients.

Prohibited Activities

All employees are expected to maintain relationships of a professional nature with Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC clients. Therefore, all employees are prohibited from engaging in personal social media communications with any current clients of Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC. This includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, as well as text messaging and instant messaging via any media. Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC is not in the habit of monitoring these kinds of communications, however employees may be subject to disciplinary action for engaging in such prohibited activities. There may be times when it is necessary for an employee and a client to communicate via text message or cell phone. Keep in mind that all communications should be work related, professional and necessary. If a client is sending you messages or calling you to discuss subjects that are not directly work related, respectfully let the client know that it is against Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC policy and let your supervisor know immediately.

Prohibited Subjects

In order to prevent communications inconsistent with the Employee Handbook's policies (e.g., Sexual Harassment Policy and Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy) and the law (e.g., HIPAA, privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and trademark laws), the following subjects may not be discussed by employees in any form of social media:

- Confidential or proprietary information of the Company;
- Confidential or proprietary information of clients, including a client's identity or health condition in any way;
- Confidential or proprietary information of the Company's business partners, vendors and suppliers;
- Intellectual property of the Company;
- Defamatory, discriminatory or disparaging comments about a co-employee, client, vendor, supplier or competitor, including content that would be in violation of the letter or spirit of the Company's Sexual Harassment or Anti-Discrimination/Anti-Harassment Policy; and
- Obscene, profane, threatening, hateful or humiliating comments about a co-employee, client, vendor, supplier or competitor.

Disclaimers

Unless an employee is serving as an approved, official spokesperson for Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC, usage of social media shall only be comprised of the employee's personal opinions and not reflect the opinion of Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC. Any unapproved, unofficial usage of social media that relates or refers to Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC must include a disclaimer that the communication is not made on behalf of the Company. Even when you are talking as an individual, people may perceive you to be talking on behalf of Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC. If you discuss healthcare, brain injury or other topics related to Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC, be upfront and explain that you work for Universal, however, add a disclaimer to the effect: "The opinions and positions expressed are my own and don't necessarily reflect those of Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC.

Employee Responsibilities

Unless approved by the Company, employees should not be using social media during work hours.

Employees using social media shall be personally responsible for their posts, including being held personally liable for defamatory, obscene, threatening, hateful, discriminatory, harassing, confidential or proprietary commentary. Employees are also responsible for promptly removing any prohibited content, which may have been posted by other individuals, from any social media in their control.

Employee Guidelines

- Do not post anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable discussing publicly at work.
- Raise your privacy settings.
- Remove comments posted by others that can get you into trouble.
- Don't do it at work unless you have permission to do so.

Company Oversight

Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC reserves the right to monitor comments or discussions about the company, its employees, customers, clients and the industry, posted by anyone, including employees and non-employees. Employees are also cautioned that they should have no expectation of privacy while using company equipment or facilities for any purpose. Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC may monitor employees through the use of video, audio or other mechanical or electronic devices. Sequoia Integrative Medical Services LLC may also override pass codes in order to access any electronic and other equipment or communications system (e.g. telephones, e-mail, voice mail and Internet).

Any employee violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination. Any questions about the appropriateness of a contemplated or past usage of social media can be directed to the Chief Compliance Officer.