To: SOM Department Chairs and ORU Directors
    GME Program Directors

From: Bruce Wintroub, MD, Interim Dean, School of Medicine
    Catherine Lucey, MD, Vice Dean for Education, School of Medicine

Date: January 5, 2015

Re: Unauthorized Observers in Clinical Setting

Recently, an individual posing as a UCSF first year medical student gained unauthorized access to a clinical environment and observed patient care. Upon investigation of this event, we found that this access was facilitated by a well-intended resident working with an established student interest group. The imposter did not have the appropriate paperwork nor did they possess or display an UCSF or UCSF affiliate ID badge. This is being investigated as a possible HIPAA violation. HIPAA violations may result in substantial fines to the institution and the involved individuals.

Please remind your faculty, residents and health professionals that no individual should ever be allowed into a clinical area to work with residents, faculty or other health professionals without an official UCSF or UCSF Affiliate ID badge, visible above the waist. If a student appears without a UCSF or UCSF-Affiliate ID badge, they should be instructed to return when they can display the required ID badge. There should be no exceptions to this rule.

Faculty and residents should be instructed that they may not allow casual visitors (high school, college students, visiting physician) in the clinical environment without going through the appropriate UCSF or UCSF affiliate appointment procedures that ensure that the visitor has completed appropriate HIPAA training and has complied with appropriate infection control standards (vaccine history and tuberculosis screening.) When they have done so, they will have a UCSF badge.

Institutional visitors (students, residents, physicians) who are here on approved research training experiences (in contrast to visitors approved for clinical experiences) may not participate in any patient care activities until they have undergone screening for immunizations/tuberculosis; their supervising faculty member must then request consent from each patient prior to allowing the research visitor to observe clinical activities. These research visitors may not have access to protected health information.
With this memo, we are empowering all who work in the clinical environment to be responsible for ensuring the privacy of our patients. If you see someone without a visible ID badge, ask him or her to display his or her badge or leave the clinical area. If you need assistance, please contact the appropriate institutional security personnel. If you are asked by someone to display your ID badge more prominently, please comply graciously.

cc: Sheila Antrum, RN, MHSA
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