



Preventing Privacy Breaches

Here are some HIPAA information and tips for staff to help prevent privacy breaches.

- PowerChart is Munson's Electronic Medical Record (EMR), which is shared with health care providers via a contractual agreement. PowerChart must be protected, guarded, and used **only** for job-related, need-to-know information.
- Use of PowerChart is a privilege that can be **revoked** for any practice employee. The contractual agreement gives Munson the authority to revoke PowerChart privileges for the entire practice if privacy breaches re-occur with no remedial action plan.
- Munson conducts frequent **audits** on PowerChart usage. The **user's name** is recorded, along with date and time every time PowerChart is accessed. All staff should be aware of this.
- Staff may access their own chart, but **not** their children's, spouse, family, or friends' chart **even if** they ask you to, ...unless the access is for a job-related purpose.
- Do not access any chart out of **curiosity or concern**. Keep good boundaries, especially with people you know, read about, are related to, or work with.
- Same name chart access without a job-related need to know may result in a verbal warning, **written warning**, or termination, depending on the facts of the case.
- Inappropriate chart access can even be **grounds for termination** if there is emotional, financial, or reputational harm to patient. For example, greater privacy is afforded mental health clients.
- We must all **consider how the patient would feel** if they knew you were in their chart? People are savvier now about HIPAA and Privacy Rights, and have come to expect privacy as their right. How would you feel if a friend or relative accessed your chart out of curiosity?
- HIPAA regulations mandate that the patient be **notified** of any privacy breach.
- HIPAA regulations also hold the **individual** employee liable for civil and criminal penalties for privacy breaches.

Thank you for all you do to protect patient privacy.