

**VOLUNTEER BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

<b>Subject:</b> Facsimile Transmission of (PHI) Protected Health Information Policy & Procedures	<b>References:</b> ADM-RM-0010
<b>Approved By:</b> Medical Records Administrator	<b>Forms &amp; Attachments:</b> VBHCS Fax Cover Transmittal Form
<b>Effective /Revised Date:</b> 11-02-2007; 07/2011, 2/2018, 9/2018; <b>8/2020</b>	<b>Policy #:</b> QM-MR-006

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to define appropriate standards for transmitting PHI (Protected Health Information) by fax and eFax.

**POLICY:** It is the policy of VBHCS to protect the facsimile transmittal of PHI and holds individuals responsible for following the proper procedure when PHI is sent via fax and eFax.

(Definitions): Workforce members: “TPO”--Treatment,( involves the administering, coordinating and management of behavioral health care services by VBHCS for its clients); Payment ( includes any activities undertaken either by VBHCS or a third party to obtain premiums, determine or fulfill its responsibility for coverage and the provision of benefits or to obtain or provide reimbursement for the provision of health care); Health Care Operations.( are activities related to VBHCS functions as a behavioral health care provider, including general administrative and business functions necessary for VBHCS to remain a viable behavioral health care provider.)-- These three areas must have permission to fax and email information in order for our company to operate and be a viable provider; eFax: the electronic transmission of data without the use of a fax machine or facsimile device.

**PROCEDURE:** All VBHCS workforce members must strictly observe the following procedures relating to facsimile communications of PHI and make reasonable efforts to ensure they send facsimile transmission to the correct destination. These guidelines apply to both manual fax (machine) or eFax (electronic) except where specified.

- a. PHI will be sent by facsimile only when the original record or mail- delivered copies will not meet the needs for TPO.

- b. Information transmitted must be limited to the minimum necessary to meet the requester's needs.
- c. Except for disclosures allowed for TPO, or federal or state law, a properly completed and signed authorization must be obtained before releasing PHI.
- d. Complete cover sheet on all facsimile communications.  
The cover sheet must contain the sender and recipient's name and contact information, date, and confidentiality disclaimer statement with instructions of what to do if the documents are received in error.  
All fax cover sheets must contain the following confidentially statement: (See VBHCS Fax Transmittal template for manual fax, for eFax, the fields MUST be completed in the eFax portal and the privacy statement MUST BE added in the Comments box.)

***Confidentiality Statement:*** *This facsimile contains confidential information which may also be privileged and which is intended for the use of the addressee(s) above. If you are not the intended recipient, or the employee or agent responsible for delivering it to the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination or copying of this facsimile or the taking of any action in reliance on the contents of this telecopied information, may be strictly prohibited. If you have received this facsimile in error, please notify us immediately by telephone and return the entire facsimile to us at the above address via the U.S. Postal Service.*

- e. Double check the entry of facsimile phone number before pressing "send" button.
- f. If a facsimile transmission fails to reach the recipient, sender will check the internal logging system of the facsimile machine to obtain the number to which the transmission was sent. If the sender becomes aware that a fax was misdirected, contact the receiver either by phone or letter and ask that the material be returned as stated in the fax cover confidentiality statement.

- g. Include the accidental disclosure of client health information in the Correspondence Log. Notify the Privacy Officer by end of work day who will conduct assessment. **Reference:** Breach Notification Policy & Attestation and/or Destruction Form
  
- h. All facsimile machines shall be programmed to print a confirmation sheet which is to be attached to the original request for information and filed in the client record; eFax confirmations will be received via email.
  
- i. Designated staff by Center Director and other Department Managers will periodically audit and test speed dial or preprogrammed numbers in manual fax machines to eliminate errors in transmission from misdialing and outdated fax numbers.