What Is PHI?

PHI stands for Protected Health Information. PHI is any information in the medical record that can be used to identify an individual and that was created, used, or disclosed while providing a health care service, such as diagnosis or treatment.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protects DPH patients’ personal health information and gives them certain rights with respect to that information. The HIPAA Privacy Rule also outlines when it is ok and not ok to use and disclose PHI.

You can find out more information about using and disclosing PHI on the OCPA website.

The following are the 18 identifiers that make health information PHI.

1. Name
2. Address (including subdivisions smaller than state such as street address, city, county, or zip code)
3. Any dates (except years) that are directly related to an individual, including birthday, date of admission or discharge, date of death, or the exact age of individuals older than 89
4. Telephone number
5. Fax number
6. Email address
7. Social Security number
8. Medical record number
9. Health plan beneficiary number
10. Account number
11. Certificate/license number
12. Vehicle identifiers, serial numbers, or license plate numbers
13. Device identifiers or serial numbers
14. Web URLs
15. IP address
16. Biometric identifiers such as fingerprints or voice prints
17. Full-face photos
18. Any other unique identifying numbers, characteristics, or codes

DPH is committed to protecting the confidential, personal, and medical information of its patients and workforce. Anyone may report violations directly and/or anonymously to OCPA at 1-855-729-6040 (toll-free) or by e-mailing compliance.privacy@sfdph.org. If your DPH facility or clinic is not assigned an onsite Privacy Officer, you may call the OCPA Hotline at 855-729-6040 with any questions or to report any suspected privacy issues.