

toxtidbits

the maryland poison center's monthly update. news. advances. information.



May 2003

HIPAA and the Poison Center

As part of the Maryland Poison Center's service and our obligation to provide good patient care, we follow-up on the cases of people who have called us for advice or about whom we have been consulted on by health care providers. We track patient status and make treatment suggestions based on the information we receive. Follow-up and outcome assessment is an essential part of providing quality poison center services to EMS, hospitals, and to the citizens of Maryland. To accomplish our mission, we must have your cooperation in providing follow up information about poisoning and overdose cases.

Some health care providers are reluctant to share protected medical information with the Maryland Poison Center, citing the new HIPAA regulations. HIPAA actually has a special provision for Poison Centers:

Poison control centers are health care providers for purposes of the Privacy Rule. Counseling and follow-up consultations provided by poison control centers with individual providers regarding patient outcomes fall under the definition of "treatment". Poison control centers and other health care providers can share protected health information about the treatment of an individual.

(Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary, 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164, Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information; Final Rule, 65 Federal Register 82626, Dec. 28, 2000.)

Therefore, it is perfectly permissible to share sensitive medical information with the Poison Center, provided it ultimately will impact the treatment and care of the emergency medical condition.

Suzanne Doyon, MD

DID YOU KNOW THAT..... The Maryland Poison Center can provide reports on the poisoning cases treated at your hospital or in your city/county in 2002?

These reports include information on how many patients were referred by the Maryland Poison Center to your hospital, how many were already in the ED when the MPC was called, and whether they were admitted or not. City/county-specific reports include reasons for exposures, ages, substances, treatment and medical outcome. If you would like to receive a report for your hospital, city or county, send an email to lbooze@rx.umaryland.edu.



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If you do not wish to receive faxes or emails from the Maryland Poison Center, call 410.706.7604 or circle your fax number and fax this back to 410.706.7184. Supported by Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene