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Department: UW Medicine Compliance

Subject: PP-16d Use & Disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI)  
Permitted for Decedents

Policy Number: 16d

Effective Date: April 10, 2003

Review Date: October 26, 2006

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***Policy:***

In certain circumstances UW Medicine<sup>1</sup> may use or disclose protected health information (PHI) for Decedents<sup>2</sup>.

**I. Decedents**

UW Medicine may disclose PHI about an individual who has died:

- A) To a coroner or medical examiner for the purpose of identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death, or other duties as authorized by law;
- B) In cases in which UW Medicine performs the duties of a coroner or medical examiner, PHI may be used or disclosed for purposes of identifying a deceased person, determining a cause of death or other duties as authorized by law;
- C) To funeral directors, consistent with applicable law, to carry out their duties with respect to the decedent (including disclosures prior to and in reasonable anticipation of the individual's death); **and**
- D) To organ procurement organizations engaged in organ procurement, banking, or transplantation of cadaveric organs, eyes, or tissue for the purpose of facilitating the organ, eye, or tissue donation and transplantation.

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<sup>1</sup> UW Medicine includes the following entities: University of Washington Medical Center and Clinics; Harborview Medical Center and Clinics; UW Medicine Neighborhood Clinics (University of Washington Physicians Network); UW Physicians Sports Medicine Clinic; UW Physician's Eastside Specialty Center; Hall Health Primary Care Center; and University of Washington Physicians.

<sup>2</sup> "Decedents" is a term used chiefly in law to describe a deceased person.

**II. Documentation of Disclosures**

UW Medicine will document and retain in electronic or written format a record of all disclosures in accordance with the entity's record retention policies and procedures. See UW Medicine Privacy Policy: *PP-25 Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health Information*.

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**Procedures:**

**I. Documentation & Retention of Disclosures**

Action
UW Medicine entities will retain a record of all disclosures in either a hard copy or electronic version in the designated record set. See UW Medicine Privacy Policy: <i>PP-25 Accounting of Disclosures of Protected Health Information</i> .

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**References:**

- I. 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164; Section 164.512 – “Uses & Disclosures for Which Consent, Authorization or Opportunity to Agree or Object Is Not Required”.
- II. RCW 70.02.050 – Disclosure Without Patient’s Authorization
- III. RCW 70.24.105 – Disclosure of HIV/STD/AIDS Test or Treatment – Exchange of Medical Information
- IV. RCW 70.58, Vital Statistics
- V. RCW 68.50, Human Remains

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UW Privacy Officer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
John A Coulter, Associate Vice President for Medical Affairs

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