



Essentia Health

2021-2022 Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow Orientation Guide

Name (please print) _____

School Affiliation _____ Program _____

The information in this Orientation Guide provides you with the necessary background and specific information necessary for your on-site learning experience at Essentia Health. You are required to complete the following, prior to your placement for a structured learning experience in an Essentia Health Hospital or Clinic location.

1. Review all enclosed information.
2. If you have questions regarding any information in this packet, contact your school or Essentia Health contact
3. When you have completed the review of information, sign and date below and remove this cover page from the packet.
4. Forward this cover page only, with student signature verifying review of information, to your school learning experience coordinator.

I have read the information provided and had an opportunity to have my questions answered regarding the following topics as they relate to my onsite learning experience at Essentia Health:

Mission, Vision, Values and Beliefs

Patient Rights and Patient Privacy Policies

Organizational Integrity and Compliance

Patient Safety

Safe Work Practices for Lifting and Moving

Infection Prevention and Standard Precautions

Hazardous Materials and Waste

Radiation Safety

Antimicrobial Stewardship

Workplace Safety and Expectations

Information Security

Occurrence Reporting

Emergency Management

Fire Safety

Smoke Free Campus

Dress Code

Student ID Badge

Parking Information

COVID-19

Social Media

- I understand the information and agree to follow the outlined responsibilities.
- I know whom to contact if I have questions/concerns about any of these topics.

Acknowledgement of Confidentiality

Healthcare facilities have legal and ethical responsibilities to safeguard the privacy of all patients, protect the confidentiality of their health information, and provide an environment and guidelines to ensure compliance with ethical practices. I understand that in my clinical experiences I may have access to confidential patient and business information even though I may not be directly involved in providing patient services. I understand that such information, whether in oral, paper or electronic format, must be maintained in the strictest confidence. Information is to be accessed and/or disclosed only if a business need exists. Any violation of patient confidentiality or unethical conduct or practices could result in immediate termination of my on-site learning experience at any Essentia Health facility.

Signature _____ Date _____



Essentia Health

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Welcome

Welcome to Essentia Health. We are pleased to have you with us as a Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow in our facility. Essentia Health is committed to the education of our future healthcare workforce.

Essentia Health is an integrated health system serving patients in three states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota. With over 13,800 skilled employees, Essentia Health is committed to helping our patients and their families lead active and fulfilling lives.

Essentia Health's reputation for excellence has been built by its many employees who contribute to a mission that places the highest value on service to patients, families and visitors. This orientation guide provides you with information to assist you in being an active participant in our mission.

Essentia Health seeks employees who embrace our commitment to patient and family-centered care in communities both large and small. We're looking for people who are committed to making patients and their families feel known and understood. Please view our employment opportunities at <https://www.essentiacaers.org/>

Mission and Vision Statements

Mission: We are called to make a healthy difference in people's lives.

Vision: Essentia Health will be a national leader in providing high quality, cost effective, integrated health care services.

Values

- Quality
- Hospitality
- Respect
- Joy
- Justice
- Stewardship
- Teamwork

Belief Statements

- Our highest priority is the people we serve.
- We believe that the highest quality health care requires a regard for both the soul and science of healing and a focus on continuous improvement.
- We believe in the synergy of sponsorship among faith-based and secular organizations.
- We believe in the value of integrated health care services.
- We believe in having a meaningful presence in the communities we serve.

Value Statements - These values are the foundation for our six belief statements.

Quality

- Avoiding injuries to patients from the care that is intended to help them. (Safe)
- Providing services based on scientific knowledge to all who could benefit. (Effective)
- Providing care that is respectful of and responsive to individual patient preferences, needs and values, and ensuring that patient values guide all clinical decisions. (Patient-centered)
- Reducing waits and sometimes harmful delays for both those who receive and those who give care. (Timely)
- Avoiding waste, including waste of equipment, supplies, ideas and energy. (Efficient)
- Providing care that does not vary in quality because of personal characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, geographic location, and economic status. (Equitable)

Hospitality

- Creating a climate which promotes a sense of community while valuing the uniqueness of the individual.
- Listening and responding sensitively to all.
- Extending warmth and acceptance to each other and to all we serve.
- Creating a welcoming atmosphere personally and institutionally.
- Welcoming new ideas and being open to change.

Respect

- Cherishing and promoting the worth of all human life.
- Treating all persons with dignity and reverence without regard to age, gender, race, minority or economic status.
- Honoring and supporting the spirituality of each person
- Valuing the dignity of all work.
- Promoting participation of all persons in the decisions affecting their lives.

Joy

- Bringing deep satisfaction
- Finding joy in your work creates a positive environment and leads to greater outcomes for our patients

Justice

- Advocating policies for the poor and powerless.
- Maintaining respectful working relationships.
- Eliminating prejudice in ourselves and in institutional policies.
- Promoting open and fair decision-making based on valid information.
- Striving to develop a global vision personally and institutionally.

Stewardship

- Utilizing human resources responsibly.
- Providing wise and respectful use of all material and monetary resources.
- Promoting conservation of resources and energy.
- Managing people, finances and property wisely on behalf of others.

Teamwork

- Collaborating as diverse members of a team to achieve a common goal.
- Sharing talents and time to help others grow and be successful.
- Accepting and valuing the ideas of others, especially when different from one's own.
- Appreciating and supporting the efforts and contributions of coworkers.
- Subordinating personal recognition to the effectiveness of the whole.
- Speaking positively of others, eliminating negativity.
- Following up on commitments and keeping one's word.

Patient Rights

Essentia Health respects the rights of patients and recognizes that each patient is an individual with unique health needs. Essentia Health shall encourage and assist, to the fullest degree possible, every patient's rights related to their civil, social, religious and psychological wellbeing. A process is in place to inform Essentia Health patients of these rights.

Patients have the right to receive care in a safe, clean and pleasant environment.

Patients have the right to appropriate medical and personal care based on individual needs.

Patients have the right to be treated with courtesy, dignity and respect by Essentia Health employees and other people providing services.

Reasonable accommodations will be made for those patients with communication impairments and those who speak a language other than English.

Patients have the right to know the identity and professional status of individuals providing services to him/her, including the right to know which physician/credentialed provider is primarily responsible for his/her care.

Patients have the right to participate in the planning of their health care. Patients have the right to be involved in discussions related to their care, including clear and concise explanations of their condition, proposed treatment(s)/procedure(s), alternatives, risks and prognosis. Patients have the right to include family members or other chosen representative in these discussions.

Patients have the right to accept medical care, refuse it, or have it withdrawn to the extent permitted by law. Patients are to be informed of the medical consequences of their decision to refuse/withdraw treatment.

While patients are recognized as having the right to participate in their care and treatment to the fullest extent possible, there may be times when a patient is unable to do so. For example, if the patient is unconscious. In these situations, the patients' legal representative or other designated person may exercise the patient's rights.

Essentia Health has an obligation to respect patients' wishes, to consider/discuss issues brought forward by patients, and to allow patients to participate in conversations about ethical issues affecting the patients.

Patients may retain and use their personal clothing and possessions as space permits, unless to do so would infringe upon the rights of other patients and unless medically contraindicated.

Patients have the right to communicate with people outside of the facility by means of visitors, verbal and/or written communication.

Written, informed consent must be obtained prior to patients' participation in experimental research. Patients have the right to refuse participation and their refusal will not affect the quality of their care.

Patients will be free from maltreatment as described in the Vulnerable Adults Protection Act. Every patient shall also be free from non-therapeutic chemical and physical restraints, except in fully documented emergencies, or as authorized in writing after examination by a patient's physician for a specified and limited period of time, and only when necessary to protect the patient from self-injury or injury to others.

Patients have the right to privacy. This right includes the right to conduct patient interviews, examinations and treatments in surroundings designed to assure reasonable visual and auditory privacy. Patients have the right to expect that all communication and records pertaining to their care will be treated confidentially and that requests for access to their records will be met within a reasonable period of time.

Regardless of payment source, patients have the right to request and receive an itemized and detailed explanation of their bill for services rendered. Patients have the right to a timely notice prior to termination of their eligibility for reimbursement or denial of coverage.

Patients have the right to a prompt and reasonable response to their questions and requests.

Patients have the right to voice complaints and recommend changes in policies and services, without recrimination. Patients have the right to have their complaints/recommendations reviewed and, when possible, resolved.

Patient Privacy

- Federal Laws (HIPAA – Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act; HITECH – Health Information Technology for Economic & Clinical Health), State Regulations and Essentia Health Policies govern how a patient's privacy must be protected and identifies a patient's individual rights to privacy. While a student, you are required to abide by applicable Essentia Health privacy policies and procedures. Please check with your faculty member or Essentia Health Manager to access these policies for you and take the time to review them.

- Privacy rules were created to ensure that the information patients share with their health care providers, and others, is protected. Respecting patient privacy is essential to providing quality care.
- Privacy rules place restrictions on the use and disclosure of patients' PHI (Protected Health Information) regardless of what form it is in (oral – paper – electronic – social media). PHI is information created or received by Essentia Health related to the past, present or future care or payment of a patient. This includes information that can be used, by itself or in combination with other information, to identify a specific patient.
- Accessing Patient Information. As a Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow, you are only allowed to access patient information required to perform the duties assigned to you by your Essentia Health preceptor.
- Disclosing/Sharing Patient Information.
 - While at Essentia Health for your learning experience, you are allowed to disclose/share patient information with Essentia Health employees who have a need to know in order to perform their required job duties.
 - **You may not remove any patient identifiable information from the Essentia Health premises.**
 - If you are required by your educational institution to produce examples of your documentation, you must follow Essentia Health policy EHA3034 by submitting and receiving approval of the “De-Identified Data for Non-Research Request Form” prior to submitting the information to your educational institution. Check with your educational institution for your process.
 - By definition, de-identified information **must** exclude all of the following patient identifiers:
 - Names;
 - All geographic subdivisions smaller than a state (street address, city, county, precinct) Note: zip code or equivalents must be removed, but can retain the first 3 digits if the geographic unit to which the zip code applies if the zip code area contains more than 20,000 people or if geographic units containing 20,000 or fewer people are changed to 000;
 - For dates directly related to the individual, all elements of dates, except year (date of birth, admission date, discharge date, date of death);
 - All ages over 89 or dates indicating such an age, except that you may have an aggregate category of individuals 90 and older;
 - Telephone numbers;
 - Fax numbers;
 - Email addresses;
 - Social security numbers;
 - Medical record numbers;
 - Health plan numbers;
 - Account numbers;
 - Certificate or license numbers;
 - Vehicle identification/serial numbers, including license plate numbers;
 - Device identification/serial numbers;
 - Universal resource locators (URLs);
 - Internet protocol (IP) addresses;
 - Biometric identifiers, including finger prints and voiceprints;
 - Full face photographs and comparable images; and
 - Any other unique identifying number, characteristic or code.

- If you believe or suspect that Essentia Health patient information has been inappropriately accessed or disclosed/shared, you are obligated to report it to the Essentia Health Organizational Integrity & Compliance Department by calling 218-786-1172.
- Do not access records of family/friends/neighbors/coworkers/others unless you have been authorized to do so. Do not access your own medical record – go through the Release of Information Department if you want information from your record.
- Your access and disclosure/sharing of Essentia Health patient information may be audited at any time.
- Patients receive information about Essentia Health privacy practices as they receive care and each time there is an update.
- To protect the privacy of our patients, employees and students may not take photos of patients, or take photos in patient areas.
- Essentia Health has designated Privacy Officers who are responsible for implementing the privacy program. If you have any questions about HIPAA and/or confidential information, please contact one of the appropriate privacy officials.

If an investigation reveals patient information has been inappropriately accessed or disclosed, sanctions (including termination of clinical experience, monetary fines and/or jail time) may be imposed on the person responsible for the access/disclosure.

Policies

Patient care is provided within the standards, policies and procedures established by Essentia Health. A directory of Essentia Health Policies and Procedures can be found on The Source by clicking on “Resources” and selecting “Policies and Procedures”.

Organizational Integrity and Compliance

“Compliance” is the responsibility of everyone (including you) associated with Essentia Health, in that everyone is to act and make decisions in a manner that meets the highest level of ethical, legal and professional standards.

As a values-driven healthcare system committed to enhancing the health of the people we serve, Essentia Health is committed to an environment in which compliance with ethics, laws, rules, regulations, sound business practices and patient care practices is woven into our corporate culture. We must exercise prudence and good judgment, and never sacrifice ethical and compliant behavior in pursuit of business objectives.

Essentia Health’s primary focus is to provide quality care to our patients in a manner that is respectful and also delivered in a cost effective and efficient manner.

Your responsibilities include:

- Abide by the applicable ethical standards laws, rules and regulations that affect Essentia Health.
- Know the requirements relevant to your duties so that potential issues are recognized.
- Immediately report any actual or potential ethical or compliance concerns immediately. Reports may be made to:
 - Your faculty member/supervisor or Essentia Health administrative contact;
 - Your management team;
 - Your Regional/Entity Compliance office;
 - Essentia Health’s Chief Compliance Officer;
 - Essentia Health’s General Counsel or
 - Via Essentia Health’s Integrity Action Line: Reports will not be traced and confidentiality of the reporter will be preserved up to the limits of the law and to the degree possible given the need to

fully investigate the reported concern. Anonymous reports can be made. Reports can be made via phone at 1-800-711-5146 or online at <https://essentiahealth.org/integrity>.

All reported concerns will be taken seriously and will receive prompt attention.

Patient Safety

One important way we can live the mission of our organization is by keeping patients safe from harm. The National Patient Safety Goals are identified by The Joint Commission as a way to focus and improve on patient safety and quality of care. The goals describe areas of risk for patient safety. It is important for you to know how you comply with these goals as they relate to your role and department (http://www.jointcommission.org/standards_information/npsqs.aspx)

All Essentia Health staff, students, faculty, residents and fellows are accountable to provide safe care as outlined in policies and procedures and to report patient safety concerns to Patient Relations/Risk Management through the Patient Safety Event Report and/or their supervisor. Healthcare-associated infections, falls, pressure ulcers, medication errors, and wrong site/procedure are common areas of concern. The Patient Safety Event Report is located both on a tile on The Source and under the Quick Links on The Source. When reporting, you may log in or choose to report anonymously. Choose the appropriate category and document what facts you observed about the situation. It's important to stay objective and not to use any bias or opinions. If the patient's comments are critical include them as direct quotes.

The screenshot shows the 'The Source' website dashboard. On the left, there is a navigation menu with contact information for West, Central, East, and West locations, as well as links for Non-Emergency Security Help, IS Service Desk, Self Service, HR Service Center, My HR, E-Mail, Disposition, Integrity, Biomed Help, Maintenance Help, and EVS Help. A large blue arrow points to the 'Reporting' tile in the main content area. The main content area consists of several tiles: 'VISION NORTHLAND', 'Essentia Performance System', 'Market Specific Information', 'Compliance', 'Reporting' (highlighted with a blue arrow), 'TOGETHER WE THRIVE', and 'Telehealth Resources'. The right-hand sidebar contains a list of quick links for various resources and portals, including Opioid Program Resources, Patient Menus (Fargo only), Patient Safety Event Report, Plum 360 IV Pump Resources, Policies & Procedures, Print Center, Saba Cloud LMS, Safety Data Sheets (SDS), StrataJazz, Tableau, TOXNET (NIH) Toxicology Data Network, Transfusion Services Guidelines, Uniform Store, UpToDate, Vaping Resources, Workday Self-Service, Workplace Violence Event Reporting, and Additional Links... Other sites listed include Nursing Portal, Primary Care Portal, Rehab Portal, East Operations Portal, Physician/APRN/PA Portal, and Process Excellence Portal. A note at the bottom of the sidebar states: 'Regional site links have been moved to the 'Region Specific Information' section.'

Safe Work Practices of Lifting and Moving

The Essentia Health Safe Patient Handling Program ensures a safe environment for our patients and all staff involved with patients who require lifting, transfer, repositioning or movement. Direct patient care providers will assess high-risk patient handling tasks and determine the safest way to accomplish them. See Policy S1018. If you have questions, make sure to ask your instructor or preceptor.

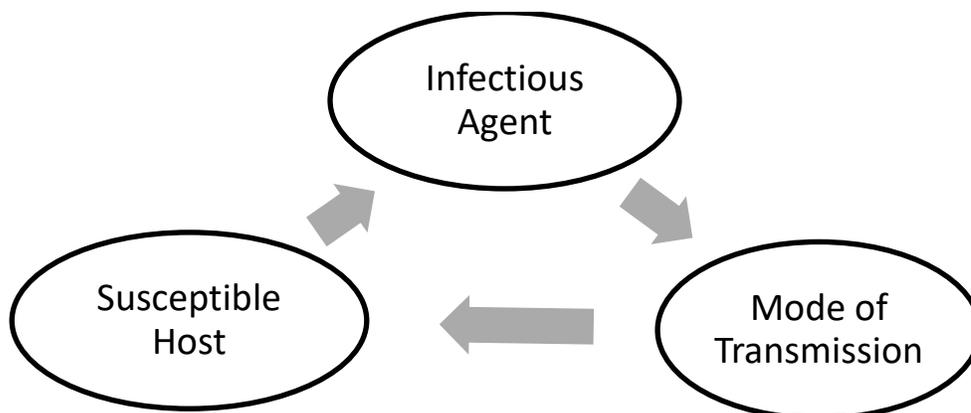
Remember to use proper body mechanics and mechanical lifting equipment

- Do not manually “boost” a patient up in bed without the use of a friction reducing transfer sheet or a mechanical device.
- Avoid bent-over postures
- Avoid reaching with your arms

- Do not pick a patient up from the floor
- Do not try to lift/assist a patient who is aggressive or combative

Infection Prevention

This guide provides a consistent approach to be used by all personnel, students, faculty, residents, and fellows for basic infection prevention. This is essential to prevent transmission of potentially infectious agents among patients, visitors, students, faculty, residents, fellows, and personnel. Infectious agents are spread through the following cycle:



Hand Hygiene is the single most important procedure for preventing transmission of infectious agents to patients, employees, and the environment.

- Hand hygiene is to be performed before and after touching a patient, before and after glove use, after body fluid exposure risk, before and after blowing nose, before and after using restroom, before and after handling food.
- The minimum duration of hand hygiene should be 15 seconds, and should be performed in view of patient and/or visitors.
- An alcohol-based hand rub is the product of choice for routine sanitizing of hands unless hands are visibly soiled. Hands and wrists must be covered with product. Rub until dry. Alternatively, soap and water may be used.
- When hands are visibly soiled, or if gloved hands have been in contact with feces, they must be washed with soap and water. Using warm water, soap hands and wrists rubbing for a minimum of 15 seconds. Rinse and dry thoroughly.
- Artificial fingernails or extenders are prohibited in patient care areas.
- Students with weeping hand lesions or conditions (e.g. hand casts/splints) that prevent effective hand washing are restricted from direct patient care clinical experiences.

Respiratory Hygiene

To prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, in addition to hand hygiene, everyone must practice good respiratory hygiene. Always cough and sneeze into your sleeve or upper arm, or cough and sneeze into a tissue and discard immediately. Do not cough or sneeze into your hand because the germs on your hands can be spread to anything you touch.

Surgical Site Infection (SSI) Prevention

A surgical site infection is an infection that occurs after surgery in the part of the body where the surgery took place. Understanding modifiable risk factors and using prevention strategies help avoid surgical site infections.

Modifiable Risk Factors for SSI:

- Contamination of the surgical site at time of surgical incision
- Sterile technique failures
- Contaminated surgical instruments

Prevention Strategies:

- Pre-surgical patient skin prep (CHG bath/shower night before and morning of surgery)
- Pre-surgical patient skin prep with dual antiseptic agent (povidone-iodine/alcohol, CHG/alcohol)
- Appropriate selection and timing of pre-operative antibiotic when indicated for the procedure type

- No hair removal, or, if necessary, removal with clipper – never razor
- Peri-operative temperature control
- Maintain glucose control in the immediate post-operative period
- Monitor for signs and symptoms of infection
- Cover primarily closed incisions with a sterile dressing from 24-48 hours post-operatively
- Wash hands before and after dressing changes and any contact with the surgical site

Standard Precautions

Many people with an infectious disease will not have signs or symptoms and may not even be aware they have one. Examples can include:

- Infection with a blood borne pathogen
- Colonization (carrier) with an antibiotic-resistant bacteria (MRSA, VRE)
- Persons who are “coming down with” an infectious illness

Standard Precautions refers to the routine use of personal protective equipment (PPE) when contact with blood or body substance is likely to occur. To prevent exposure to unknown cases of infectious disease, PPE use should be based on the task being performed, and not rely on a known diagnosis.

Appropriate Selection and Use of Protective Barriers

Personal protective equipment (PPE) include gloves, facial protection (masks/goggles or face shield) and cover gowns. They are provided at no cost to employees and students.

- **Gloves** are to be worn when touching blood and body substances, mucous membranes, rashes and the non-intact skin of all patients. Gloves must be worn when performing invasive procedures such as obtaining blood specimens and starting IVs. Gloves are to be worn when handling all items and surfaces soiled with blood or body substances. Gloves must be removed, and hands sanitized, immediately after completing the task they are worn for, or as soon as patient safety permits.
- **Facial protection** is to be worn when performing care of procedures that are likely to generate droplets of blood or other body substances. Examples include: surgical procedures, wound irrigations, intubations and trach care. A surgical mask is to be worn when placing a catheter or injecting material into the spinal canal or subdural space (during myelograms, lumbar puncture and spinal or epidural anesthesia.
- **Cover gowns** must be worn when performing care or procedures that are likely to expose skin or clothing to splashes of blood or other body substances.

Putting on and Taking off your PPE

PPE must be put on and removed in the correct order, using the correct methods, to prevent contamination of skin and clothing.

Put your PPE on in the following order: 1) Hand hygiene 2) Gown 3) Mask 4) Eye Protection 5) Gloves

- Remove your PPE in the following order using the described techniques
Gloves: Grasp the outside of one glove with our opposite hand and peel it away from hand, turning the glove inside out. Holding the removed glove in your gloved hand, slide two fingers of your ungloved hand under the cuff of the remaining glove. Peel the second glove away from hand, turning it inside out to cover the other glove. Discard in trash receptacle.
- Goggles/Face Shield: Grasp band or earpiece with clean hands. Discard in trash receptacle.
- Gown: Unfasten ties and peel gown off turning it inside out and holding it away from body. Discard cloth gowns in linen hamper; paper gowns in trash receptacle.
- Mask: Grasp elastic band (or untie) from the back of your head and bring the band up and overhead to remove. Do not remove by touching front of mask. Discard in trash receptacle.

If you are exposed to any blood or body fluids wash or rinse the exposed area thoroughly and report the incident to your instructor or preceptor as soon as possible.

Waste Handling

Standard Precautions are to be used for waste handling activities. Always wear gloves for any trash handling activities in patient care areas. Discard trash and other waste in the appropriate waste container as follows:

Infectious Waste	Regular Trash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood, blood products or other body fluids (pleural, pericardial, cerebrospinal, synovial, amniotic, peritoneal) in containers/lab instruments • Items that are dripping and saturated with the above fluids • Blood bags and administration tubing • Tubing and drainage collection devices (hemovacs, JP bulbs, pleurovacs) that cannot be emptied and rinsed of all visible blood, or contaminated with blood that can “flake off”. • Any trash grossly contaminated with blood. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV tubing and solution containers • Empty urinary catheter tubings and drainage bags • Ventilation tubing • Cast padding with serious drainage • Diapers, Tripads, etc • Respiratory suction canisters • Regular trash from isolation rooms

Sharps Safety

Needle sticks and injuries caused by scalpels or other sharp instruments account for the majority of blood and body fluid exposures in healthcare settings. To reduce the risk for sharp object injuries use available sharp safety devices, dispose needles and other sharps in sharps container immediately after being used, do not remove needles from syringes, except as needed for administration of IV medications or for sending specimens contained in syringes to the lab. Any item capable of puncturing a trash bag should be put in the sharps container. Sharps containers should be emptied when they are 75% full.

If an item needs to be retrieved from a sharps container, label the container “do not discard” and contact your instructor/preceptor to arrange for the appropriate search of the container.

Prevent Workplace Contamination

- Clamp or tie off tubing on drainage collection devices that are not emptied.
- Remove adaptors and tubes and securely cap all ports on suction canisters that are not emptied.
- Dispose of above items in double red bags.
- Replace infectious waste bags when $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Do not compact. Close by grasping and tying top corners of trash bag.

Cleaning Up Blood or Bodily Fluids

- Always wear gloves!
- Use paper towels and dispose in infectious waste container.
- Remove and discard soiled gloves and wash hands.
- Put on clean gloves
- Disinfect the soiled area with Essentia Health-approved disinfectant or disinfectant wipe.
- Remove and discard gloves
- Wash hands

Engage in Other Safe Workplace Behaviors

- Handle all blood and body fluid specimens as biohazard (infectious).
- Do not eat or drink beverages in areas where blood and bodily fluid exposure is likely.
- Do not handle contact lenses or apply lip balm in areas where blood and body fluid exposure is likely.
- Do not store blood and bodily fluids in areas/refrigerators where food or medications are stored.
- Clean all patient rooms/environmental surfaces the same way, making sure to disinfect high-touch surfaces (bedrails, bedside tables, etc.) on a daily basis to prevent the spread of contact-transmitted organisms.
- Clean/disinfect/sterilize all patient equipment and instruments according to Essentia Health policies.

Transmission–Based Precautions and Patient Isolation Protocols

The risk of spreading most infectious agents can be managed by following the Infection Prevention Practices outlined in the preceding sections. However, some diseases, because they are transmitted by droplet or airborne routes, or because there is an increased risk for disease transmission in the hospital setting, require precautions **in addition to standard precautions**. Recommendations vary by patient location and practice setting.

In the Hospital and Emergency Room Settings

- Isolation needs are to be communicated to individuals entering the patient's hospital and exam rooms by an isolation sign posted outside of the patient's room.
- Isolation needs are communicated to individuals and departments involved in the care of the patient through Epic header information, hand-off communication tool (SBAR), and verbal communications.
- When entering the hospital or procedure room of a patient in **Contact Precautions** for any reason, exam gloves and a cover gown are always required.
- When entering the hospital or procedure room of a patient in **Droplet Precautions** for any reason, a surgical mask is always required.
- When entering the hospital or procedure room of a patient in **Airborne/Contact Precautions** for any reason, exam gloves and cover gown are always required. A mask is required if the patient is not wearing a mask.
- When entering the hospital or procedure room of a patient in **Airborne Precautions** for any reason, a N95 Respirator mask or PAPR is always required.

In the Clinic and Home Health Settings

- All patients, including those with MRSA and VRE, are to be managed with Standard Precautions.
 - Contain excretion/secretions with a dressing or other means
 - Disinfect environmental surfaces and patient equipment when visibly soiled and, at minimum, at the end of each workday.
- Patients with known or suspected airborne or droplet-transmitted pathogens are to be instructed to wear a snug fitting surgical mask and escorted to clinic exam rooms as soon as possible.
- In the event of admission to the hospital, isolation needs must be communicated to the receiving facility.

Use Transmission Based Precautions for the following Diseases:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • C difficile | • MRSA (Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) |
| • Chickenpox (varicella) | • VRE (Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci) |
| • Herpes Zoster/Varicella (Shingles) – localized in immuno-compromised patient or disseminated | • Mumps (infectious parotitis) |
| • Influenza | • Pertussis (whooping cough) |
| • Lice/Scabies | • Rubella (German measles) |
| • Measles (rubeola) | • SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) |
| | • Tuberculosis, pulmonary, confirmed or suspect |

Hazardous Materials and Waste

Hazardous substances are used in some departments of the Essentia Health System.

A Hazardous Substance is capable of producing health problems or injuries that can affect specific organs such as the eyes, skin or lung, or they can affect the entire body. Some common chemicals and medical gases used are formaldehyde, solvents, ethylene oxide, anesthetic gases, and nitrous oxide.

Hazardous Waste is waste capable of causing harm or injury to humans, animals or the environment and must be disposed of according to existing regulations. Examples include mercury, fluorescent light bulbs, and chemotherapy agents.

Universal Waste is hazardous waste with reduced requirements under EPA regulations. Examples include devices containing mercury, fluorescent lamps and batteries.

Manufacturers provide Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for most substances (formerly called Material Safety Data Sheets or MSDS) – even those that are non-hazardous. As required, Essentia Health maintains the SDS for hazardous substances only. SDS are available on The Source under Quick Links.

Handling of Hazardous Substances and Wastes

Hazardous substances and wastes require special handling and disposal. Use personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling substances and wastes, such as eye protection, gloves and masks. PPE is determined by the type of hazard, and recommended PPE is noted on the SDS.

Pharmaceutical waste must be segregated from all other waste streams. This includes proper disposal of any unused medication or pharmaceutical into Pharmaceutical Waste Containers. Examples of Pharmaceutical Waste include:

- Partially empty vials, bottles, creams, ointments, shampoos, pills, tablets
- Partially empty IV bags, piggy backs and tubing with pharmaceuticals
- Empty containers that held Epinephrine base, Warfarin or Nicotine
- Aerosol inhalers

Trace chemotherapy waste must be segregated from all other waste streams for disposal. Trace chemotherapy waste includes:

- Empty chemotherapy vials
- Empty IV bags and tubing
- Gowns, gloves and goggles
- Wipes, cleaning towels

Your department may provide you with department-specific details on hazardous waste disposal. If you have questions about the chemicals you work with, ask your instructor, preceptor, Essentia Health Safety Officer, or refer to the Safety and Infection Prevention Policies.

Radiation Safety

As a student, you may be exposed to radiation devices/sources during your clinical experience such as:

- X-ray machines
- Mammography
- Fluoroscopy
- Laser
- Nuclear Medicine
- Radiation Therapy

Personnel who work around radiation on a regular basis must monitor their exposure using film badges. This helps ensure that they are not exposed to unsafe levels of radiation as established by radiation safety regulatory agencies. Unborn babies are especially sensitive to radiation. Notify your preceptor/instructor immediately if you think you are pregnant.

Follow these basic precautions to minimize your exposure to radiation:

- Time: Limit the amount of time you spend near sources of radiation
- Distance: Maximize the distance between yourself and any radiation (at least 6 feet)
- Shielding: Place shielding such as a lead apron between yourself and the radiation source to prevent exposure

Antimicrobial Stewardship

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that antimicrobial resistance is significantly impacting effective prevention and treatment of a wide range of infections.

The term antimicrobial refers to any agent, whether natural, synthetic, or semi-synthetic that acts against all types of microorganisms including bacteria (antibacterial), viruses (antiviral), fungi (antifungal) and parasites (antiparasitic). Antimicrobials are a valued resource, playing a critical role in treating infections and decreasing both morbidity and mortality when used appropriately. However, overuse and inappropriate use have the potential to cause patient harm and contribute to both increased rates of *Clostridium difficile* infections (CDI) and emergence of resistance.

Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) refers to, and is inclusive of all coordinated efforts and activities associated with optimizing clinical outcomes while minimizing unintended consequences of antimicrobial use – prescribing when appropriate, promoting optimal antimicrobial regimens, narrowing therapy as indicated, and optimizing dosage, route of administration, and addressing duration of therapy.

Improving the use of antimicrobials is imperative to preserve future efficacy of existing antimicrobial agents, and is an important patient safety and public health issue, as well as a national priority.

Medical Interpreters

Under federal law, patients and their family members have the right to an interpreter. Interpreters offer the healthcare team a “voice” in a different language to better communicate with the patient and ensure understanding. Essentia Health provides this service at no cost to the patient. We discourage family members, friends or non-qualified staff members from acting as interpreters.

Health Literacy

As health care providers, we must be able to identify a patient’s health literacy. Low health literacy is the inability to read and comprehend medical directions and health related materials. Inability to understand and follow medical directions can have dire consequences for the patient. Promote understanding by:

- Using simple language and pictures as appropriate
- Limiting external distractions when providing direction
- Asking the patient to “teach it back to you” to confirm understanding
- Involving trusted family members or friends in the patient education

Workplace Safety and Expectations

Your work environment should be free from harassment in all forms including offensive language and behavior regarding an individual’s race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, or sex. Workers are cautioned to consider their behavior and comments from the perspective of anyone who might be offended by them. Forms of harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual harassment - unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature
- Verbal harassment - epithets (nick names and slang terms), derogatory comments or slurs
- Remarks about a person’s body or sexual activities
- Unnecessary touching, patting, pinching, hugging, inappropriate closeness
- Rudeness or refusal to cooperate with an employee because of his or her gender
- Retaliation against an employee for making a complaint about sexual harassment
- Visual harassment - derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings.

Both Federal and Minnesota statutes prohibit harassment in the workplace. All reports of harassment by co-workers, supervisors or third parties will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Any complaints of harassment and actions taken to resolve such complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible consistent with identifying the problem. If the investigation confirms the complaints regarding the alleged offender, it will result in disciplinary action against that individual.

Any person who experiences/is witness to harassment or inappropriate behavior should report it to their supervisor, the Essentia Health Compliance Manager or other supervisory employee. No one who reports what he/she believes to be an incident of harassment may be subjected to retaliation of any kind for making the report.

Staying safe in the workplace is a growing concern nationally. Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the workplace. To stay safe we need to watch for changes in behavior which may escalate to challenging others and potentially to physical abuse. If you recognize a patient, patient family member, colleague or stranger has escalating behaviors utilize these five ways of handling a difficult or confrontational person:

- Establish rapport by being respectful
- Empathize with the person and acknowledge their feelings
- Ask the person to stop and give a warning
- Calmly, but firmly, set limits
- Act quickly to help de-escalate, and call for help

How to Reduce Your Risks

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Know who is in your work area and for what reason
- Wear your ID badge and ensure other students and employees are wearing theirs
- Use the buddy system when traveling to dark or remote areas, or call Security for an escort
- Don't bring large sums of money to work
- Never prop open a door that is supposed to be closed
- Let someone know when you are working alone

When to Contact Security or Police:

- Suspicious persons and activities
- Persons creating a disturbance
- Intoxicated/combatative persons
- Vehicle accidents
- Vandalism, stolen/missing property
- Assaults/potential domestic threats
- Lighting and other safety/security deficiencies
- Unlocked doors that should be locked

Active Shooter

An active shooter is an individual killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area. Common motives include anger, revenge, ideology and untreated mental health illness. Response Actions to action shooter:

- Alert and notify: ensure your own safety before calling your emergency number or 911
- Take action you feel will best protect yourself.
 - Evacuate - escape and get out
 - Hide - hide out, take cover and barricade
 - Take Action - as a last resort and when in imminent danger, do everything you can to incapacitate the shooter

Information Security

Access to Confidential Information

- Students/Faculty/Residents are provided access to information systems based on a required educational need. This means you are only provided access as needed to complete your clinical experience.
- Students/Faculty/Residents must never use information systems to access confidential information for reasons of curiosity.
- Students/Faculty/Residents with access to Epic (Electronic Medical Record) must **never access their own medical record.**

Essentia Health Email

Some students/faculty/residents are provided with an Essentia Health email account. Though the following list is not exhaustive, Essentia Health email may never be used for any of the following purposes:

- To harass, intimidate, or threaten another person
- To distribute obscene, abusive, libelous, or defamatory material
- To distribute "spam" emails (chain letter email, sick child, pyramid schemes, political issues, etc.) as these emails may contain viruses.
- For any purpose which is illegal, against Essentia Health policy, or contrary to Essentia Health's best interest
- To conduct any type of personal solicitation
- To communicate any information that does not reflect Essentia Health's policy regarding race, creed, religious denomination, age, national origin, color, handicap, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, and gender.

Essentia Health computer systems are subject to audit and monitoring for the purpose of detecting inappropriate or unauthorized use of systems and networks or data. Essentia Health reserves the right to inspect and exercises control over any and all of its computer equipment with or without prior notice. This may include, but not be limited to, retrieval, review, audit, interception, access and disclosure of any electronic message composed, sent or received.

Essentia Health Internet Usage Policy

Students/Faculty/Residents at Essentia Health may at times utilize the Internet while onsite. Though the following list is not exhaustive, Essentia Health systems may never be used to access the Internet for any of the following purposes:

- Violate the laws and regulations of any nation, state, city or local jurisdiction in any material way
- Discuss confidential information about Essentia Health
- Download illegal content including pornography, unpurchased/unapproved software, music, videos, etc.
- Play games or engage in chat sessions of a non-business nature
- Stream or play non-business content including music and video for personal use

Students/Faculty/Residents accessing the Internet shall never use Internet services such as email, bulletin board messaging or chat-mode conversations using their Essentia Health user ID.

Essentia Health computer systems are subject to audit and monitoring for the purpose of detecting inappropriate or unauthorized use of systems and networks or data. Essentia Health reserves the right to inspect and exercises control over any and all of its computer equipment with or without prior notice. All students' access to and usage of the Internet is subject to monitoring and random audit.

Essentia Health Password Security

- Password should be at least 12 characters in length, include (1) upper case letter and (1) number and may include lower case letter(s) and special character(s) – Example: Flow3r\$f0R3mOm
- Passwords must not contain any part of your user name
- Consider using a “passphrase” instead of a word
- Don't use a single word or name the year, don't use too-simple terms such as Password1234
- Don't begin or end your password with a number and don't use the word Essentia or Essentia Health
- All passwords are confidential, never write down or share password with anyone

Information Security Incident Reporting

Report all unusual or suspicious Information Security Incidents to the IS Help Desk at 218-786-3788.

Examples on Information Security Incidents include:

- Found your PC turned on with characters types in the password box;
- Someone asks for your password or you are told to use another employee's password;
- Someone tells you confidential information about a patient and you didn't have a need to know.

Occurrence Reporting

We hope that during your educational experiences you are not hurt or injured. Also that the patients you provide care do not have any adverse event or outcomes occur. If you should become injured at Essentia Health, promptly inform your instructor as well as the unit staff/manager for proper follow-up. If you should witness or see potential for injury to a patient, promptly inform unit staff/manager and your instructor.

<https://thesource.essentiahealth.org/Pages/Workplace-Event-Reporting.aspx>

Emergency Management

Emergency Preparedness standards are part of our accreditation process. Emergency Standards have been set with specific requirements regarding communication, resources, assets, security, staff, utilities, patients and disaster volunteers. Responses to emergency situations (disaster, evacuation, bomb threat, infant abduction, hazardous spill, security/civil disturbance) are specific to each department and facility. Work with your instructor or preceptor to ensure you know your department's response plans and Emergency Codes for your facility.

Fire Safety

All students/residents/fellows/faculty must know the appropriate fire response for their work area. Please review the specific response for the facility you are assigned.

Exits and Fire Alarm Pull Stations

- Identify the location of exits in your department
- Identify the location of fire alarm pull stations (near exits and stairwells)
- Identify the location of fire extinguishers in your department

General Safety

- Exit doors, smoke doors, stairwell doors, fire alarm pull stations, fire extinguishers, medical gas control valves and electrical panels must be kept free from obstruction.
- Exit signs must remain lit and visible
- Halls, stairways and fire exits must remain clear
- Storage must remain 18 inches from sprinkler heads
- Cardboard boxes and other combustibles should be removed immediately to reduce the amount of combustible material and cannot be stored in a fire egress.
- Door latches must not be taped
- Automatic doors must swing/shut freely
- Oxygen cylinders must be chained or stored in appropriate holders in designated areas
- Portable electric heaters are not allowed in any Essentia Health facility

Fire Response Protocol

- Horizontal Evacuation means going beyond one set of fire doors (the double automatic closure doors and stairwell doors) into a safe area on the same floor
- Identify the areas of refuge in your departmental area for evacuating patients and staff into a safe area on the same floor (horizontal evacuation)

When responding to a fire, use the acronym **RACE** which means:

R - Rescue anyone in immediate danger of smoke inhalation or fire

A - Alarm pull the nearest fire alarm and dialing your facility's emergency number and provide fire location

C - Confine fire and smoke by closing all doors in the fire area

E - Evacuate/Extinguish Assist patients and visitors via outside exits and check all rooms to ensure everyone has left. Only extinguish if it is safe and you have been trained.

Only use the fire extinguisher if you have been trained to do so. When using a fire extinguisher, remember the "**pass-word**"

P - Pull

Pull the pin from the fire extinguisher handle at the top of the fire extinguisher

A- Aim

Point the extinguisher nozzle at the base of the fire

S- Squeeze

Squeeze the lever to discharge the extinguishing agent

S - Sweep

Sweep the nozzle from side to side across the base of the fire

Smoke Free Campus

Essentia Health is a smoke-free and tobacco-free campus. In an effort to provide a clean, safe, and comfortable environment for employees, patients, and visitors, students/faculty/residents are required to comply with the current Essentia Health smoking policy. Many of our visitors, patients, and employees may have medical sensitivities to the smell of smoke, whether on a person or clothing. Students'/Faculty'/Residents' personal hygiene must include being free of offensive odors, including smoke.

Dress and Appearance Requirements

Essentia Health is proud of their public image and strives to maintain the high standards of patient service and medical care for which we are known. A professional appearance, including dress and personal hygiene, is required for all students. Please refrain from wearing scented products. Department Management has the authority to determine appropriate dress guidelines. Dress guidelines should comply with applicable regulations by OSHA, The Joint Commission, CDC and other regulating agencies. A student's/faculty's/resident's dress and appearance should be appropriate for their program and department requirements.

Please consult your department/unit supervisor for information concerning the uniform and dress policy applicable for your Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow role and department. A Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow

is expected to present for their clinical assignments dressed professionally. Failure to comply with these dress and appearance requirements will result in the Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow being asked to leave the clinical area.

Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow ID Badges

Students/Faculty/Residents must wear a photo identification badge at all times during their rotation. Depending on your program and clinical experience site, you may be asked to wear your college/university issued photo identification badge, or you may be asked to obtain and wear an Essentia Health Student/Faculty/Resident/Fellow identification badge. Your instructor, or Essentia Health student orientation specialist, will provide you with more information. NOTE: Essentia Health badges must be returned at the completion of your clinical rotation.

Library Services

Location: Second floor, Essentia Health St. Mary's Medical Center, Duluth, MN

Hours: 8:00 AM to 6:30 PM Monday through Thursday; 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Friday

Intranet Site: Access to Essentia Health Library Services databases, electronic resources, service request forms and information about the library are available 24/7 on the library's homepage:

<http://thesource.essentiahealth.org/Library>.

Computer Searches: The library staff can assist students and interns with computerized literature searches for Essentia Health related projects and offers many resources. Links to library databases and electronic journals can be found on the library's homepage.

Parking Information

Parking space is intended for our patients and may be limited. We request students/faculty/residents to park away from clinic/hospital entrances out of courtesy to our patients. Carpooling is encouraged. Make sure you understand where you can park at your facility. Contact security for an escort if you have safety concerns.

Essentia Health Detroit Lakes: Students/Faculty/Residents should park in staff designated areas only. Contact Human Resources for a current parking map.

Essentia Health Duluth Main Campus: Students/Faculty/Residents are not to park in patient parking or ramps unless authorized to do so. Non-metered street parking may be available. Some alternative parking options at the Duluth Main Campus include:

- **Duluth Transportation Authority (DTA) U-PASS Program** – This program gives students/faculty of Duluth/Superior area Colleges/Universities unlimited rides on the DTA with valid college I.D.
- **Surface Lot Parking** – There are several surface parking lots surrounding campus within a 5 minute walk. Permits for these lots are \$20/mo. Parking permit decals are required, and the surface lots are first-come, first-served.
- **Off-hour parking in Essentia Health Ramps and Surface Lots – After 2:00 p.m. and on Weekends** – A parking permit is required to park in the ramps and surface lots during off-hours. A special permit may be available to students and faculty for after-hours parking. Contact Essentia Health Security at 218-786-2475.

Essentia Health St. Joseph's Hospital, Brainerd: If parking on campus, park only in areas designated for employee parking or park on the street.

Essentia Health Fargo 32nd Avenue: Students/Faculty should park in the Montana or Wyoming parking lots located on the west side of the storage units and enter through the North Main Entrance between 0600 – 2000. During off shifts, students may park in the West employee parking lot.

Essentia Health Fargo South University: Students/Faculty may park in the patient/visitor parking lot (back rows) located across the street from the north entrance.

COVID-19 Information

Wearing a cloth face mask is mandatory before entering our facilities. Students/Residents/Faculty need to provide their own clean cloth mask and their own scrubs if you are not on a surgical rotation in a department that supplies them. If you are not on a rotation that requires scrubs business casual dress would be expected unless otherwise noted by your preceptor or faculty.

COVID-19 Screening

Before reporting on site each day please self-screen using the questions below. You may or may not also be asked these or other questions at our screening stations.

- EXPOSURE TO CONFIRMED OR SUSPECTED COVID-19
 - Have you been tested or come in contact with a person who has tested positive or has a test pending for COVID-19 in the last 14 days without wearing a mask or eye protection? **YES/NO**

- DO YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS NOT ATTRIBUTABLE TO A PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITION? **YES/NO**
 - Fever
 - Chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
 - Muscle aches
 - Headache
 - Sore throat
 - Nasal congestion
 - Loss of taste
 - Loss of smell
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea/vomiting

- Is your temperature less than 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit? **YES/NO**

Post-Screening Guidelines

- If ALL of the ABOVE are answered “**NO**” and no fever is present, you may enter the facility for your experience that day, You will need to change into procedure once you have entered the facility, and proceed to the department where you will be provided eye protection, if providing direct patient care. The eye protection must stay on the unit at end of shift and be disinfected and stored in designated area until next clinical. If we are requiring procedure masks to be reused it also must stay on the unit at end of shift and stored in designated area until next clinical. Please check with your preceptor, faculty or the COVID-19 tile on “The Source”, the Essentia Health intranet page for the most up to date information on PPE requirements.

- If ANY of the ABOVE are answered “**YES**” or a fever is present, you **WILL NOT BE ALLOWED** to enter the facility and will be asked to stay home and start an E-Visit or call your provider’s office for a COVID-19 test. You should then stay home until:
 - You have no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of fever reducing medications during that time period) **AND**
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when the cough or shortness of breath has improved) **AND**
 - A COVID-19 swab test has been confirmed to be **NEGATIVE** (documentation must be provided to school)

Positive COVID-19 Test

- If you test positive you will need to report this to your school and your school will need to notify their Essentia Health Clinical Placement contact (StudentPlacement@EssentiaHealth.org) and have you contact the Essentia Health Workability hotline so we can identify potential exposure to others and follow up on when you would be allowed to return on site.
- If a patient or an Essentia Health employee tests positive on a unit or department you were placed on Essentia Health will notify your school once a potential exposure to you has been identified.

If you become ill while at our facility, please inform your instructor/preceptor as you will need to go home. If staff/faculty observes you having symptoms of illness you will be asked to go home and follow the above screening guidelines for return to site.

Essentia Health will not allow students or faculty to participate in the care of patients who are confirmed or suspected positive for COVID-19; nor participate in any procedure that would require an N95 mask. Essentia Health will not provide N95 masks for students or faculty and does not expect students or faculty to bring their own.

It is expected during this time that students/residents/faculty will remain on the unit or in the department they have been assigned to be in for their time on-site.

Students/Residents/Faculty will also be expected to distance while on site including during breaks. When not wearing a mask to eat or drink students/residents/faculty will need to remain at least 6 feet apart and should not sit next to or across the table from one another. Students/Residents/Faculty observed violating distancing or masking and eye protection requirements will be reminded of the requirements and continued violation may result in being asked to leave our facilities.

Essentia Health is not able to provide any space including cafeterias or any other open public space for pre or post clinical meetings. Any meetings should be held virtually or off site.

DoFFing Process

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Remove the mask by holding the ear loops or straps only. The front of the mask is contaminated, so remove slowly and carefully.
3. After removing mask, visually inspect for contamination or damage. If damaged, contaminated or wet the mask should be discarded.
4. If removed for a break the mask may be placed in a clean single use paper bag or placed external side down on a clean single use paper towel.
5. Perform hand hygiene.

Re-Donning Process

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Carefully remove the mask from the paper bag or from the paper towel by touching the ear loops or straps only.
3. Place the mask on the face, touching the ear loops only. Do NOT touch the front of the mask.
4. Discard paper bag or paper towel if used.
5. Perform hand hygiene.

Re-use of Cloth Facemasks

Cloth facemasks are worn as a means of source control to prevent respiratory secretions produced by the wearer from contaminating other persons and surfaces.

1. Cloth facemasks should be laundered daily using hot water washing and high heat drying and reused.
2. It is the wearer's responsibility to launder the cloth mask daily.

Eye Protection

1. To enhance student and faculty safety, they will wear eye protection (goggles or face shield) during all patient care encounters in all care settings (ambulatory, acute care, long-term care).
 - a. Personal eyeglasses and contact lenses are NOT considered adequate eye protection.
 - b. Students/Residents/Faculty who work behind a plexiglass barrier (e.g. Registration) are not required to wear eye protection. If students/residents/ faculty perform patient care activities while not behind the plexiglass barrier, eye protection is required (e.g. escorting a patient to another area of the facility).
2. Face shield is the preferred eye protection if available.
3. Eye protection must be disinfected when removed.
4. Eye protection should be disinfected and stored in a designated area until the next shift.
5. Eye protection may be disinfected and reused unless foam or cloth band is contaminated with blood, respiratory or nasal secretions, or other body fluid or if the eye protection becomes damaged.
6. Eye protection is not to be worn on top of the head at any time.

Social Media

Essentia shares a warning about Social Media Forums

We live in an extremely social world – as evidenced by the popularity of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. And while it's great to share with friends and family online, Essentia Health's Organizational Integrity & Compliance Department reminds all staff that there are established guidelines for employee participation in social media forums that aren't sponsored by our health system.

"We've recently seen an increase in the number of conversations that Human Resources and Organizational Integrity & Compliance Department are having with employees related to messages or comments they make on social media, particularly Facebook," explains Senior Compliance Specialist Misty Teigen.

Employees and students/faculty/residents who comment on Essentia Health in any manner on a social media site are subject to all other Essentia policies – including, but not limited to, privacy and security of patient information, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) regulations, state privacy laws and Essentia privacy policies and standards.

To help you understand these concerns more fully, we share an actual event, although we've eliminated most details: An Essentia employee working in the Emergency Department of a small community leaves work after her shift, then posts on her Facebook page. "You would not believe some of the things I see. This morning, it was a drunk guy who crashed his snowmobile into a tree. He's got some broken bones, but he'll be OK. Good grief!"

No name was used in the post, but unfortunately, an incident like this is usually big news, particularly for a small-town newspaper. From there, it's easy to figure out who the "drunk guy" was. And there you have it – a HIPAA violation.

If someone can piece together any kind of identification from what you've said or posted, you shouldn't be sharing that information or posting about it.

When in doubt, Organizational Integrity & Compliance Department recommends don't post and don't share.

Mistaken online beliefs

Courtesy of HIVE Strategies, we share three mistaken beliefs that can lead to HIPAA violations:

Mistaken belief 1: Communication is private. No one will see it except the intended recipient.

Reality: When you post something on any social media site, remember it could end up anywhere. Even private posts are not private.

Mistaken belief 2: I can delete my post. Then, no one else will see it.

Reality: Server farms are always scouring the web, preserving every scrap of information. Even if you post something, then delete it a few minutes later, it's still alive in the digital world.

Mistaken belief 3: It's OK if I talk about patient on Facebook or Twitter as long as I don't use their name.

Reality: Under HIPAA, patient information is safe only when it is stripped of 18 identifiers. In small communities, any innocent comment about a patient may help others identify the subject of the post.