Health professionals have the ethical responsibility to protect patient privacy and confidentiality rights. This same responsibility extends to pharmacy students during their pharmacy practice experiences. Breach of confidentiality occurs when information about any patient is provided to any individual who does not have a legitimate use (either patient care or teaching) for the information received. This includes all information pertaining to a patient’s care regardless of whether or not it is documented in a patient care record. Confidentiality is a right of the patient and never open to interpretation by the health professional/student.

In all practice settings, students are expected to honor the patients’ right to confidentiality. Any breach of patient confidentiality will result in failure of the practice experience or other disciplinary action. Actions that constitute breach of confidentiality include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Photocopying any part of a patient’s medical record.

2. Discussion of any patient’s case for purposes other than the provision of patient care or for legitimate teaching purposes.

3. Discussion of the medical condition of any UNMC/The Nebraska Medical Center employee or student with any other UNMC/The Nebraska Medical Center employee or student outside the confines of the patient care team. Any UNMC/The Nebraska Medical Center employee’s case, known to faculty or students, should not be used for teaching purposes.

4. Identification of patients by name during any patient discussions that are conducted outside the confines of the patient care team or student meetings with preceptors. When patients are discussed in larger meetings, they should be identified by initials only.

5. Discussion of patient cases in inappropriate public places where one’s comments could be easily overheard by other individuals. Examples of such places include the cafeteria and elevators.

6. Reading the charts of patients who are not being cared for by the student’s assigned service, unless assigned by the preceptor.

7. Including information in internship assignments that could lead to a patient being identified.
8. Discussing the contents of a pharmacy’s prescription files, or other patient information, with any individual other than the pharmacist(s) who work(s) at the particular practice site.

9. Providing other individuals with access to any patient’s medical record or with access to information from patient medical records. Individuals who are not members of a team providing care to the patient have no legitimate reason for reading a patient’s medical record.

10. Discussing with any other individual information regarding family members or friends of patients.

Students must remember that patients and their families have the right to privacy and that health care professionals and students are responsible for protecting their rights. Students are particularly reminded that celebrities who may be patients, family members of patients, or visitors at UNMC/The Nebraska Medical Center are entitled to the same confidentiality, privacy and dignity as less well known individuals.

Students who violate a patient’s right to confidentiality will fail the practice experience on which the violation occurred. Any further confidentiality violations will result in additional disciplinary action being taken.

Students and faculty are encouraged to discuss the ethical and legal considerations of patient confidentiality at the onset of each practice experience in order to clarify these and other guidelines that may exist.

_________________________________________  ____________________________________________

Signature                                      Printed Name

_________________________________________

Date