



CONDUCT COUNTS!

Professional Obligations

SCENARIO

Jen has had a rough few months. She tries to laugh about the fact that she is officially part of the 'sandwich generation,' but she's exhausted. Since January, she's had to deal with her 80-year old Mom having a stroke, her husband getting laid off, and her 11-year old son fracturing two metatarsal bones.

To help bring in extra money, Jen has been picking up extra shifts at her casual position in the Hospital in addition to her full-time homecare job. When her son got hurt at soccer camp a couple of months ago, she took him to Emerg and didn't even give it a second thought when she looked at his health record a week after to remind herself what the physician had said about follow-up. She was just trying to schedule her life so that she could attend his next appointment, and besides, she was his Mom.

Jen didn't realize that the Hospital had been conducting random audits of employees' MIS use until she was asked to attend a meeting with her manager and an HR rep. At the meeting, Jen was told that they were aware she had viewed her son's record, and they also knew that she had looked at her mother's health record on two occasions in the weeks following her admission. Jen had forgotten about looking at her Mom's record and was stunned to hear that the Hospital was terminating her employment because of these privacy breaches. As a result, an employer report is submitted to the CRTO.

RESULTS

As follow-up to the employer report, the investigator appointed by the Inquiries, Complaints and Reports Committee (ICRC) contacted the Hospital and obtained copies of the audit results from Jen's MIS logins over the past year. The Hospital's privacy policies, as well as copies of emails to Jen that included links to online resources and learning modules on privacy, were also provided to the investigator. In addition, the CRTO's investigator interviewed the manager, the IT person who conducted the audit, the HR representative and Jen.



PROFESSIONALISM

"Professionalism" or professional conduct is a term often used to describe the behaviours that are expected of individuals who hold a certain role in society. A "professional" is typically someone who has obtained skills that are recognized as requiring specific, intensive training and who applies those skills in a position impacting others (e.g., engineer, lawyer, RT, PT, MD, etc.). Professionals are often held to moral, ethical and legal standards because of this potential impact.



CONDUCT COUNTS!

Professional Obligations

EXPECTATION

As a regulated healthcare professional, Bryan has the responsibility of putting the needs of his patients before his own needs. He chose to work back-to-back shifts, so he also must choose to ensure that all of the information about the patients at the hospital he's departing gets transferred to the incoming RT. This means documenting thoroughly in patient charts and communicating all relevant patient information during hand-off.

The issue of time-theft is greater, as Bryan appears to have contravened several standards of practice by accepting payment for time he did not work:

- Section 1.12: aspiring to a high level of professional efficacy at all times;
- Section 1.14: demonstrating compassion, trust and honesty;
- Section 1.24: conducting all professional activities and programs and relations honestly and responsibly, and by avoiding any actions that might discredit the profession;
- Section 4.4: refraining from making false, conscious, deliberately misleading or deceptive statements, orally or in writing.

BOTTOM LINE

As a professional, you have an obligation to consider the impact of your actions on your patients, your colleagues and your employer.

RESOURCES

[A Commitment to Ethical Practice](#)

[CRTO's Standards of Practice](#)

