

## HIPAA and Connecticut EMS SWORD

The Connecticut Poison Control Center is considered an exempt entity under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), enabling health care professionals to confidentially share patient information. Under HIPAA regulations, as recorded in the Federal Register (Vol 65, N. 250, p.82626), poison control centers are listed as exempt entities:

“We note that poison control centers are health care providers for purposes of this rule. We consider the counseling and follow-up consultations provided by poison control centers with individual providers regarding patient outcomes to be treatment. Therefore, poison control centers and other health care providers can share protected health information about the treatment of an individual without a business associate contract.”

[https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/133026/PvcFR04\\_1.pdf](https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/133026/PvcFR04_1.pdf)

EMS responders (who are considered covered entities) are permitted to share confidential patient information with the Connecticut Poison Control Center. The Connecticut Poison Control Center can also share protected health information with EMS responders.

The Connecticut Poison Control Center is a health care provider whose recommendations are part of the treatment provided by the patient care team, resulting in better patient outcomes, reduced hospital stays and decreased health care costs.

The Connecticut Poison Control Center also performs public health surveillance for which it is recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a public health authority to whom covered entities may disclose protected health information; this includes patient names, which are necessary for patient follow-up. The CT Poison Control Center only shares de-identified information with state and community partners.