



Informed Consent

It's Everyone's Business

What is INFORMED CONSENT?

Informed Consent is a legal process that requires the treating physician or proceduralist (physician or APN/PA as per policy PC/PS23) to provide a patient with all relevant information about a proposed procedure or treatment prior to obtaining the consent of the patient to carry out the procedure or treatment. The following are four items of information that must be provided:

- Nature of the procedure
- Risks
- Benefits
- Availability of alternative treatment (including no treatment) and the risks and benefits thereof.

Informed consent protects the patient by providing him/her with complete information on which to make a well-informed decision. Informed consent is a two part process, one element involves the form for documentation purposes but the most important piece of the process is the **conversation** between the practitioner and the patient regarding the procedure/treatment.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM AUDIT 2009 – There's Work To Be Done!!

Total of 80 Consents Audited	% Correct
Correct Name of Patient	94.74%
Full Name of All Practitioners	56.86%
Treatments / Procedure Ordered	98.73%
Risks and Hazards	80.60%
Witness of Signature	75.00%
Specialized Addendum Attached	85.71%
TMH Consent?	100.00%
Distinct by Performing Physicians	100.00%
Telephone Consent Documentation	N/A
TDH Specific Form Used	N/A
No Abbreviations	96.10%
Appropriate Signature?	100.00%
Overall Average Compliance	88.77%

The Informed Consent Safety Squad is tasked with improving compliance with respect to the informed consent process. As mentioned above, the process consists of 2 parts, the completed form and the content of the conversation. Both parts of the process need to be assessed. Auditing the informed consent form involves critical assessment of specific criteria such as full and correct name of the patient and practitioner, documentation of test/procedure, risks and hazards and noting the witness signature. Evaluating the conversation between the practitioner and the patient is more complicated and involves special training in order to survey patients post procedure regarding the quality of the informed consent discussion (in process and results forthcoming). The survey questions specifically target risks and benefits, alternatives and any problems or issues that might occur.

The team recently completed the audit of 80 random informed consent forms. The overall average for compliance was 89% with the details noted in the table on the right. Areas for greatest improvement include documenting the practitioners full name at only 57% correct and the signature of the witness was noted only 75% of the time. Keep in mind, there are multiple physicians with the same last name, therefore a first initial and last name is not acceptable. In addition, there were several forms with the witness signature left blank. Our goal is to have 90% or greater compliance and with added focus on the areas for improvement we are sure to get there!

Each week we will be highlighting a different story to illustrate the importance of a well-informed consent and the impact it makes on the lives of the patients. We would like to hear what you and your department are doing to improve the informed consent process.

Please send your informed consent stories to wellinformedconsent@tmhs.org.