

Health Services

Client Confidentiality, Privacy, and Records Policy

Policy:

It is the policy of Health Services at Birmingham-Southern College to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of all patients who use our services and to protect the security of any records generated as a result of patient encounters and any health records obtained during the enrollment process as a student to BSC. This protection exists for students, faculty and staff members.

Some circumstances demand limitations on this protection, however. These situations include, but are not limited to:

1. A court order or subpoena for medical records
2. State law requirements for “reportable diseases/conditions” which include:
 - Meningitis
 - Measles, mumps, varicella, polio, tetanus, pertussis
 - Tuberculosis
 - STI’s (HIV/AIDS)

With any of the exceptions, information may be released without consent of the patient to necessary parties such as public health officials, other health care professionals and College officials. Exceptions to confidentiality are outlined in the [ADPH Reportable Diseases Guidelines](#).

By state law, immunization records may be shared with parents or schools where students transfer without consent (U.S. Department of Education).

Information that remains confidential, without exception, can be only be accessed by other parties through a signed consent by the patient.

Philosophy:

The relationship between medical professionals and their clients demands privacy and confidentiality regarding what is discussed for clients to trust they are in a safe environment in which they can seek care for any concern they have. Every effort is made to guard a clients’ confidentiality and privacy in all matters related to their visits to Health Services, including the health records that are maintained by the office. Postsecondary health records may include substantial medical information, including physical exam reports, notes on appointments, and immunization records. All of the medical information maintained in Health Services is protected by the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) regarding access by other individuals.

Clients with specific questions or concerns about confidentiality should discuss with the Associate Director during their office visit. Both the client and health care professional can work together to maintain privacy and preserve confidentiality to personal, sensitive matters.

Procedures:

Health Services maintains a file on all enrolled students, and keeps records on students up to 10 years after the student has left the college. The files are paper copies, kept in the office of the Associate Director of Health Services, in locked filing cabinets. The cabinets and office doors are closed and locked at all times when the Associate Director is not present. The Director of Counseling and Health Services and the Office Coordinator have access to the keys to the filing cabinets and to the office in case access is needed when the Associate Director is not available.

Students can make appointments with the Associate Director by calling or walking in to the clinic to sign up for an appointment. Due to this arrangement, there is a sign-in book in the lobby of Counseling and Health Services where patients sign up for appointments. Each day's list is removed at the end of the day and locked in a filing cabinet in the Associate Director's office.

Appointments made for the weekly visit by a doctor are also scheduled through Health Services. Files and records generated by the doctor are kept separate from BSC HS files and are stored at the doctor's office.

Responsible Individuals:

Yvette Spencer, Associate Director of Health Services, 205-226-7720; yspencer@bsc.edu

Sara Hoover, Director of Counseling & Health Services, 205-226-4989; shoover@bsc.edu

David Eberhardt, Vice President of Student Development. 205-226-4731; deberhar@bsc.edu

Applicable Regulations and Reference Documents

[Alabama State Law, where applicable](#)

[Alabama Department of Public Health: Reportable Diseases Guidelines](#)

[Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#)

SACS-COC 3.9.2 Security of Records