

emrU: a year later; talking points; emrU & HIPAA

emrU newsletter, September 2014, by [Nick May](#)

A year of emrU

Did you know that it's been a year since we [launched](#) emrU in the Carver College of Medicine? Since then we've begun to integrate emrU into the curricula of two [additional colleges](#), as well as the eight professions served by the [Interprofessional Education](#) initiative.

emrU poster & handout from the Group on Information Resources now available online

Our [poster presentation](#) and [accompanying handout](#) from [June's Group on Information Resources \(GIR\) conference](#) are now available on the [emrU website](#). For details on our presentations and the GIR conference, please look at the [June 2014 emrU newsletter](#).

If you would like to share emrU with colleagues or your leadership, we recommend [the handout](#) as a useful aid to any elevator pitch.

HIPAA no longer required for emrU access.

emrU access no longer requires users to have HIPAA compliance on file, which reduces the paperwork hurdle required to bring new students online with emrU.

This change *only* applies to access to the EMRU Epic software environment. It *does not* apply to the UIHC_PRODUCTION Epic environment used daily across UI Health Care to provide patient care. Full HIPAA compliance is still required for access to any Epic environment other than EMRU, including when students transition to clinical experiences.

emrU access without HIPAA: the story

As you know, emrU is an ever-evolving and cutting-edge project. We are one of the few health science campuses in the country currently experimenting with integrating electronic medical records into our curricula.

As part of this, we are breaking new ground every day – logistically, technically, and on a policy front. Previously, UI HealthCare's security policy dictated that access to *any* Epic software environment (including EMRU) required users to complete both HIPAA training and sign a HIPAA attestation statement. This made sense; access-to-Epic was synonymous with access-to-clinical-data, which is protected by HIPAA.

However, with the advent of emrU this has changed – access to an Epic environment no longer automatically means access to protected health information. emrU contains *no real patient information*; our patients' medical records are fictional cases created by our faculty. Thus, despite being an Epic environment, no protected health information will ever exist in EMRU.

This decision enabled us to work with our security experts to create a new policy position for emrU: access to EMRU no longer requires HIPAA compliance.