

**Texas Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church  
Center for Clergy Excellence  
Group Health Benefits**

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**Policy 225**

HIPAA – Privacy Act

Under HIPAA, Personal Health Information (PHI) is to remain confidential. Personal, identifiable health information about individuals that is created or received by a health plan, provider, or health care clearinghouse and is transmitted or maintained in any form is considered PHI. "Identifiable" means that a person reading this information could reasonably use it to identify an individual.

The Group Health Benefits Office (GHB) complies with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). It is also in compliance with the equivalent Texas state law (Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 181)

Employees for the Center for Clergy Excellence, Business Associates and Committee members as defined in the HIPAA regulations (TPA's, auditors, consultants, etc) have signed Business Associate Agreements which stipulate that the PHI is to remain confidential. Disclosure of any privileged and confidential information on participants or dependents of the plan outside the execution of their duties is a violation of the agreement and could result in penalties as defined by HIPAA and/or termination. The plan document contains additional information regarding how PHI is handled by the GHB office, its committee and those who have signed Business Associate Agreements.

- *In the event there is a contradiction between the GHB policy and the plan document, the Plan Document shall prevail.*
- *The above policy is to comply with the overall GHB Committee decisions and is periodically reviewed by the committee.*

\*Ref: 2000 Conference Journal, Pg.j-67

Revised 7-1-11