Bridging the Gap: HIPAA Training for IMGs

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AIM Statement:

The goal of this project was to identify and bridge the knowledge gap for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) in regards to the use and sharing of health information according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Introduction

- Significant differences in electronic medical records (EMR) and use of personal health information (PHI) around the world[1]
- International medical graduates (IMGs) have varying levels of familiarity pertaining to EMR use in the United States
- About 25% of GME trainees nationwide are IMGs[2]
- No identifiable training or research has been conducted in this area
- Several local IMGs have received citations for inappropriate use of EMR based on these differences and a lack of clear training

Methodology

- Created a taskforce including administration, faculty, and current IMGs in training at the UMN
- Literature review of the limited research around HIPAA training for IMGs
- Identified various potential knowledge gaps
  - Personal experiences
  - Literature
  - Examples from the University
- Established learning goals to address those gaps
- Collaborated with the HIPAA Compliance Office (HIPCO)

Create a Taskforce

- Faculty
- Current IMG residents
- Administration
- HIPCO representative

Evaluate Existing Content

- Literature review
- Assess current training
  - Found to be insufficiently detailed and targeted

Identify gaps and objectives

- Ethical and legal principles about sharing private health information in the US
- How health systems identify HIPAA violations
- Management and consequences of HIPAA violations
- How trainees can appropriately access health information for education or research purposes
- Limitations of consent to share information

Create new Curriculum

- Had taskforce members draft script for case-based scenarios
- Members participated in audio recordings for more engaging presentation of the information

Figure 1: Concept map for creating training module

Review and Distribute

- All content reviewed by HIPCO for accuracy and legality
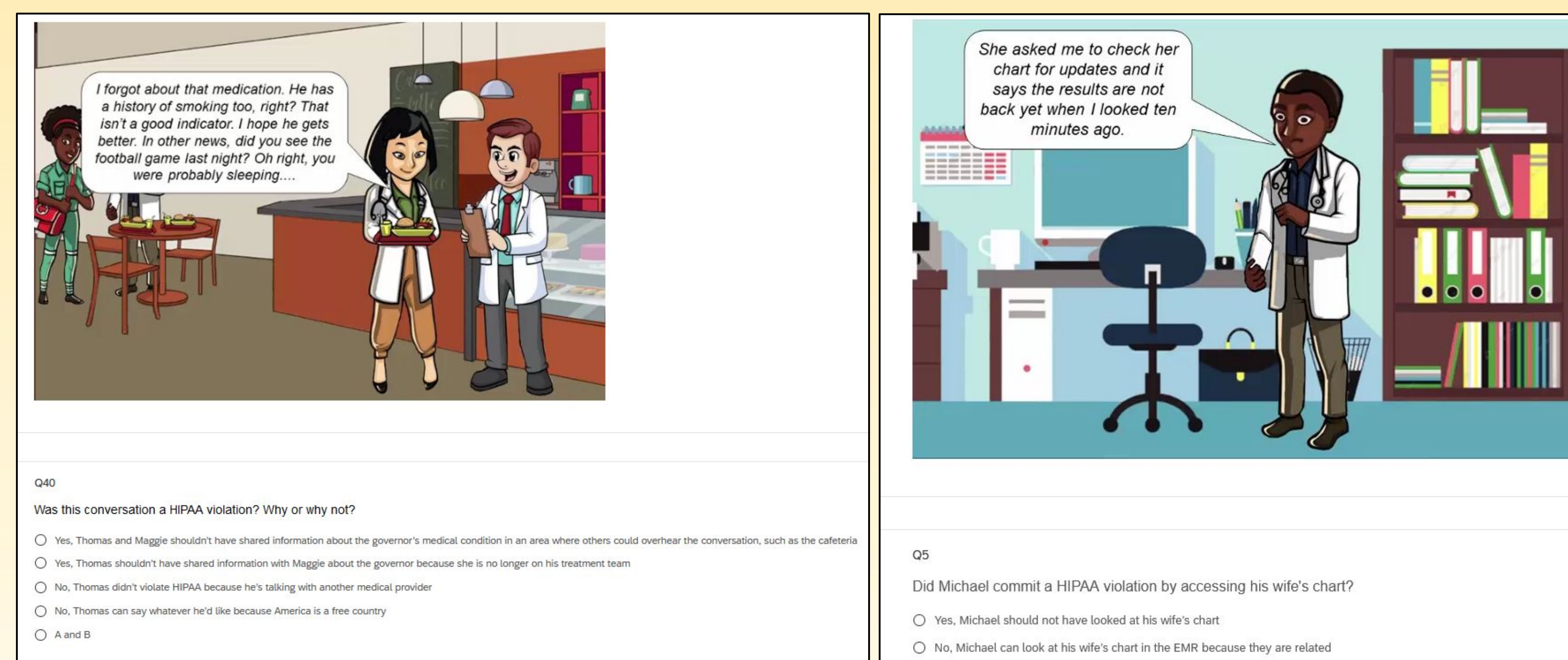- Distributed through GME office as part of the annual re-certification materials

Figure 2: Screenshots of the training module

Results

- Created a 30-minute training module using four case scenarios
- Currently, 141 IMG residents and/or fellows have completed the training
- The module was presented at the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC) and was requested for all incoming trainees
- All incoming residents/fellows will provide feedback to evaluate its efficacy and improve the course

Conclusions

- HIPAA can be confusing for anyone, but particularly for IMGs who have not grown up or trained in the US healthcare system.
- Further efforts are required to improve this training and streamline it for future use.

References

[1] Ahmed, Awad A, et al (2018). International Medical Graduates in the US Physician Workforce and Graduate Medical Education: Current and Historical Trends. *JGME*.

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[3] Anthony, Denise L, et al (2014). Institutionalizing HIPAA Compliance: Organizations and Competing Logics in U.S. Health Care. *J Health and Social Behavior*.

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