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This policy on Internet Peer-to-Peer File Sharing is an addendum to the UNC HCS Information Security Policy.

Internet Peer-to-Peer File Sharing

Peer-to-peer (P2P) file-sharing programs such as KaZaA, Napster, Gnutella, iMesh, CuteMX, Scour Exchange and FreeNetfile, are Internet applications that allow computer users to share electronic files with other users connected to a common file-sharing network. P2P file sharing should not be confused with Microsoft's file sharing services used to share information within UNC HCS. P2P file sharing programs can be used to share any type of electronic files, but are commonly used to share music, movies, and video games. P2P file-sharing programs increase the unrestricted connectivity between computers connected to a common P2P network. This heightened connectivity can expose computers to risks beyond those raised by other Internet activities.

It is the policy of UNC HCS to prohibit the use of P2P file sharing applications on all UNC HCS computers. P2P file-sharing applications allow users to covertly communicate and share virtually any file with unauthorized parties. File-sharing programs, such as *KaZaA, Napster, Gnutella, iMesh, CuteMX, Scour Exchange, and FreeNetfile* can easily locate open computer ports on a firewall to defeat blocking attempts. The existence or use of these programs on any computer connected to the UNC HCS network, including UNC SOM, places the user in violation of this policy.

P2P File Sharing Security Risks:

P2P file-sharing exposes UNC HCS to many types of security risks:

- Files downloaded from P2P networks may contain viruses, worms, or hostile code. P2P users may be at risk as viruses and worms can spread undetected to other users on the network and possibly expose PHI.
- Vulnerabilities in P2P applications may allow hackers to illegally access and alter PHI.
- Spyware contained in P2P programs may allow the unauthorized collection and distribution of Protected Health Information (PHI) or other confidential information.
 - *These programs are a part of the standard installation of Morpheus, KaZaA, Bearshare and perhaps others unknown to us at this time.*
- By their nature P2P file-sharing programs use a disproportionate share of the network which may hinder network performance causing valuable information to become unavailable on the network.