



Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**SUBJECT: RETENTION OF HEALTH RECORDS AND
X-RAYS**

Policy No.: A307
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PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines in accordance with the Department of Health Services policy on retention and destruction of health records and x-rays.

POLICY:

A. Health records shall be secured and maintained by each respective department as follows:

- Health Information Management shall secure and maintain the patient's original record that includes microfilm.
- Medical Imaging shall secure and maintain X-ray films.
- Occupational Health Services shall secure and maintain employee health records.

B. Patient Records and X-Rays Retention/Destruction Criteria:

- Adult patients, 7 years following discharge/treatment (last day of service).
- Minor patients, at least, one year after such minor has attained the age of 18, but in no event less than 7 years following discharge/treatment (last day of service).
- The facility must obtain Department of Health Services' Chief Financial Officer's approval to maintain medical records beyond the retention period.
- Health records involved in civil or criminal litigation or regulatory activities shall be maintained until legal counsel approves destruction.
- Destruction cycles must be cleared with the Financial Officer before destruction to assure there are no outstanding audits.
- Microfiche copies of health records shall be maintained no more than 20 years from date of filming.
- The electronic version of the health record must be maintained per the legal retention requirements as specified in DHS record retention policies.

- No original record will be destroyed until verification of the completeness and clarity of the scanned document.
- If a hospital ceases operation, the arrangement must be made within 24 hours for the transfer and safe preservation of medical records for the time period by the regulations.

C. Employee Health Records Retention/Destruction Criteria:

- Employee health records shall be kept for the duration of employment and a minimum of three years after termination.
- The industrial injuries (exposure to hazardous substances or environment) record shall be maintained and secured for 30 years, after termination of employment without exception.

DEFINITIONS:

1. Retention Period: The total time a record is kept.
2. Deposition: The action that accomplishes the preservation, storage, and disposal of records.
3. Disposal: The elimination of records by destruction.

GUIDELINES:

Retention period considerations:

- Space constraints: The space available will determine whether the healthcare facility will purge a record after 7 years or whether it will request approval to retain the record for a longer period.
- Frequency of use: Healthcare facilities should consider how often records are used in deciding to exceed the 7 year retention period.
- Historical or research use: Consideration should be given to space cost and personnel when retaining medical records for historical or research use.

REFERENCE: California Code of Regulations Title22, Section 70751, Title 8, Sections 70723, 3204 Department of Health Services, Policy No.881
DHS Policy 390.3, Protecting Health Information after Facility Closure

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