

**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: 11359
VERSION: 1**

SUBJECT/TITLE: HIMS - RETENTION OF MEDICAL RECORDS AND X-RAY FILMS

POLICY: Retention Period for Paper Medical Records

PURPOSE: To establish the Department of Health Services policy on retention and destruction of medical records and x-rays.

DEPARTMENTS: HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

DEFINITIONS:

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

PROCEDURE:

1. **RETENTION PERIOD FOR PAPER MEDICAL RECORDS**
 - Adult patients, 10 years following discharge treatment.
 - Minor patients, at least one year after such minor has attained the age of 18, but in no event less than 10 years following discharge treatment.
 - Obstetrical records, as long as the record of the child are retained, at least 19 years.
 - Fetal monitoring strips, 19 years following discharge but no less than 10 years.
 - Medical records involved in civil or criminal litigation or regulatory activities, shall be maintained until DHS legal counsel determines the medical record may be destroyed.
 - The facility must obtain Department of Health Services Chief Financial Officer approval to maintain medical records beyond the retention period. Approval will be based on the availability of the requestor to clearly indicate revenue generation (from research grant funds etc.) to pay for extra maintenance costs.
 - Medical records involved in financial audits shall be maintained until DHS' Chief Financial Officer determines they may be destroyed.
 - The facility's Chief Financial Officer should be informed prior to destruction to ensure there are no outstanding audits. Destruction of records shall be consistent with DHS policies and procedures for destruction of protected health information.

2. RETENTION PERIOD FOR ELECTRONIC RECORDS

- Adult patients, 10 years following discharge treatment.
- Minor patient, at least one year after such minor has attained the age of 18, but in no less than 10 years following discharge/treatment.
- Obstetrical records, as long as the records of the child are retained, at least 19 years.
- Medical records involved in civil or criminal litigation or regulatory activities, shall be maintained until DHS legal counsel feels they may be destroyed.
- The facility must obtain Department of Health Services' approval to maintain medical records beyond the retention period. Approval will be based on the ability of the requestor to clearly indicate revenue generation (from research grant funds, etc.) to pay for extra maintenance costs.
- The facility's Chief Financial Officer should be informed prior to destruction to ensure there are no outstanding audits. Destruction of records shall be consistent with DHS policies and procedures for destruction of protected health information.
- Destruction of records shall be accompanied by a destruction certificate which shall include the following:
 1. Date of destruction
 2. Description of records or record series disposed of
 3. Inclusive dates covered
 - a. Method of destruction:
i.e. Burning, Shredding, pulping, demagnetizing, overwriting, pulverizing or any other type of description
 4. Records destroyed by (person or company)
 5. Witness with signature
 6. HIM Department manager's signature

3. X-RAY FILMS RETENTION PERIOD

- Adult patients, 10 years following discharge treatment.
- Minor patients, at least one year after such minor has attained the age of 18, but in no event less than 10 years following discharge treatment.
- X-rays films involved in civil litigation or regulatory activities shall be maintained until DHS legal counsel determines the records may be destroyed. Destruction shall be consistent with DHS policies and procedures for destruction of x-ray film.

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4. MICROFILM RETENTION PERIOD

- Microfilm copies of medical records shall be maintained not more than 20 years from the date of filming.

GUIDELINES: RETENTION PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS

1. 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 of time.
2. Frequency of use: Healthcare facilities should consider how often records are used in deciding to exceed the 7 year retention period.
3. Historical or research use: Consideration should be given to space, cost and personnel when retaining medical records for historical or research use.

AUTHORITY:

1. Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 70751 and 71551 establish the following minimum standards:
 - Patients' records including x-ray films or reproductions thereof, must be Preserved for a minimum of seven years following discharge of patient, Except that the records of un-emancipated minors must be kept at least One year after such minor has reached the age of 18 years and, in any case, not less than seven years.
 - If a hospital ceases operation, arrangement must be made within 48 hours of transfer and safe preservation of medical records for the time period required by the regulations.
2. A Guide to Hospital Record Retention – published by California Association of Hospital and Health Systems. (CAHHS)
 - Health facilities should retain “The medical records of pregnant women” for as long as they keep the records of their children, for at least 19 years.

References: Title 22, California Code of Regulations, Section 70751 and 71551	
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