

**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: 12
VERSION: 1**

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

POLICY: Medical records and x-ray films will be retained in accordance with Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations, Sections 70751 and 71551, which require that patients' records, including x-ray films or reproductions thereof, must be preserved for a minimum of seven (7) years following discharge of the patient, with the exception of records of unemancipated minors, which must be kept for at least one year after such minor has reached the age of 18 years and, in any case, not less than seven (7) years. Under California Hospital Association guidelines, medical records for pregnant women should be maintained for as long as the records of the children are kept; at least 19 years.

PURPOSE: To establish a ValleyCare policy on the retention and destruction of medical records and x-rays.

DEPARTMENTS: All

DEFINITIONS: **Retention Period** – The total time a record is kept.

Disposition – The action which accomplishes the preservation, storage, and disposal of records.

Disposal – The elimination of records of destruction.

PROCEDURE: **I. RETENTION OF PAPER AND ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS**

Paper medical records shall be maintained as follows:

- Adult Patients – Seven (7) years following discharge/treatment
- Minor Patients – At least one year after the minor patient has attained the age of 18, but in no event less than seven (7) years following discharge/treatment.
- Obstetrical Records – As long as the records of the child are retained; at least until 19 years of age.
- Fetal Monitoring Strips – At least 19 years following discharge.
- Medical Records Related to Civil or Criminal Litigation or Regulatory Activities – Until legal counsel determines and advises that the medical records may be destroyed.
- Medical Records Related to Financial Audits – Until the Department of Health Services' Chief Financial Officer determines that the

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medical records may be destroyed.

Paper medical records that have been scanned and are available electronically/on-line in digital format and part of ValleyCare's electronic medical record shall be retained for no more than one (1) year from the date of scanning, or as determined by legal counsel.

Destruction of medical records must be approved by ValleyCare's Chief Financial Officer prior to destruction to ensure there are no outstanding audits. Destruction of medical records shall be consistent with Department of Health Services' Policies and procedures regarding the destruction of protected health information.

In accordance with State Law, in the event Olive View-UCLA Medical Center ceases operation, arrangement must be made within 48 hours for the transfer and safe preservation of medical records for the time period required.

II. RETENTION OF X-RAY FILMS AND MICROFILM

- X-ray films for adult patients will be retained for seven (7) years following discharge/treatment.
- For minor patients x-ray films will be maintained for at least one year after the minor patient has attained the age of 18, but in no event less than seven (7) years following discharge/treatment.
- Medical Records Related to Civil or Criminal Litigation or Regulatory Activities – Until legal counsel determines and advises that the medical records may be destroyed.
- Microfilm copies of medical records shall be maintained for no more than 20 years from the date of filming.

III. RETENTION PERIOD CONSIDERATIONS

The determination as to whether a record will be purged after the required retention period should take into account:

- A. Whether sufficient space exists to retain the records for a longer period of time.
- B. The frequency of use of the records.
- C. Whether the records should be maintained for historical or research purposes; consideration should be given to the space, cost, and personnel requirements associated with the retention of the records.

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References: California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Sections 70751 and 71551 California Hospital Association, "Guide to Hospital Record Retention" DHS Policy 881, "Retention of Medical Records and X-ray Films"	
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