

# Medical Records Management SOP

|                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Document no.   | SOP-HLC-010                |
| Revision       | 1.0                        |
| Owner          | Health Information Manager |
| Effective date | September 15, 2026         |
| Review cycle   | Every 12 months            |

## 1. Purpose

To keep patient records complete, accurate, secure and available to authorized staff, while releasing information only to properly verified and authorized requesters.

## 2. Scope

Applies to the management of paper and electronic patient records, including release of information requests. Clinical documentation content standards are covered by separate department SOPs.

### Definitions

|                              |                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Release of information (ROI) | A request from a patient, provider or third party for a copy of some or all of a patient's medical record.                    |
| Authorization form           | A signed document from the patient or their legal representative permitting release of specific records to a named recipient. |
| Retention schedule           | The facility's documented policy for how long different types of records must be kept before they can be destroyed.           |
| Chart deficiency             | A missing signature, order or required entry that must be completed before a record is considered complete.                   |

## 3. Responsibilities

|                            |                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Health Information Clerk   | Files and scans records, tracks chart deficiencies and processes routine release of information requests.    |
| Health Information Manager | Oversees the department, approves complex or sensitive release requests, and manages the retention schedule. |
| Provider                   | Completes and signs documentation and clears assigned chart deficiencies within the required timeframe.      |
| Privacy Officer            | Reviews unusual or disputed release requests and investigates any suspected privacy breach.                  |

### RACI matrix

| Activity                           | Health Information Clerk | Health Information Manager | Provider | Privacy Officer |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Track and clear chart deficiencies | R                        | A                          | R        | -               |

| Activity                                            | Health Information Clerk | Health Information Manager | Provider | Privacy Officer |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| Verify and process a release of information request | R/A                      | C                          | I        | C               |
| Approve a sensitive or disputed release request     | I                        | R/A                        | I        | R               |
| Apply and execute the retention schedule            | R                        | R/A                        | I        | C               |

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

## 4. Materials and PPE

### Materials, tools and systems

- EHR and document management system
- Chart deficiency tracking report
- Release of information authorization forms
- Retention schedule policy document
- Secure shredding or destruction service log
- Photo ID verification process for in-person requests

## 5. Procedure

| Step | Task                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Owner                    | Done                     |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5.1  | <b>Scan and file incoming documents</b><br>Scan paper documents and file them into the correct patient record in the document management system within the timeframe set by department policy.                                                                                                                                | Health Information Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.2  | <b>Run the chart deficiency report</b><br>Run the deficiency report on the schedule set by the department, identifying missing signatures, orders or required entries by provider.                                                                                                                                            | Health Information Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.3  | <b>Notify providers of deficiencies</b><br>Send deficiency notices to the responsible provider with a due date, and escalate to the medical staff office for repeated overdue deficiencies.                                                                                                                                   | Health Information Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.4  | <b>Complete assigned deficiencies</b><br>Review and complete assigned chart deficiencies, such as missing signatures or dictated notes, within the timeframe required by facility policy.<br><b>Checkpoint:</b> Charts are marked complete only after every required signature and entry is present.                          | Provider                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.5  | <b>Receive a release of information request</b><br>Log the incoming request, whether from the patient, another provider or a third party, and identify the specific records and date range requested.                                                                                                                         | Health Information Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.6  | <b>Verify the requester's identity and authority</b><br>Confirm the requester's identity with photo ID or an equivalent verification method, and confirm they are legally entitled to receive the records requested.<br><b>Checkpoint:</b> Requester identity and legal authority are verified before any record is released. | Health Information Clerk | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Step | Task                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Owner                      | Done                     |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5.7  | <b>Confirm a valid authorization</b><br>Check that the signed authorization form covers the specific records, date range and recipient requested, and that it has not expired.<br><b>Warning:</b> Never release records based on a verbal request alone or an authorization form that does not match the request. | Health Information Clerk   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.8  | <b>Escalate sensitive or unclear requests</b><br>Route requests involving sensitive record categories, minors, deceased patients or legal disputes to the health information manager or privacy officer for review before release.                                                                                | Health Information Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.9  | <b>Compile and release the records</b><br>Compile only the records covered by the authorization, redact any information outside its scope, and send them through an approved secure method.                                                                                                                       | Health Information Clerk   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.10 | <b>Log the disclosure</b><br>Record what was released, to whom, when and by what method in the disclosure tracking log required for accounting of disclosures.                                                                                                                                                    | Health Information Clerk   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.11 | <b>Apply the retention schedule</b><br>Review records approaching the end of their retention period against the facility's retention schedule before scheduling destruction.                                                                                                                                      | Health Information Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.12 | <b>Destroy records securely</b><br>Destroy eligible records using an approved secure method, such as shredding or certified electronic destruction, and log the destruction with date and method.                                                                                                                 | Health Information Manager | <input type="checkbox"/> |

## 6. Quality checks

- Chart deficiency rate stays below the facility's target for overdue items.
- Every release of information request has a verified requester identity on file.
- Disclosure log entries match the volume of processed release requests.
- No record is destroyed before its retention period has expired.

## 7. Records

- Chart deficiency tracking report
- Release of information authorization forms
- Accounting of disclosures log
- Record destruction log

## 8. KPIs

- Average chart deficiency completion time
- Release of information turnaround time
- Percentage of requests verified before release
- Records destroyed on schedule versus overdue

## 9. Common mistakes

- Releasing records based on a phone request without written authorization.
- Filing a document into the wrong patient's record.
- Letting chart deficiencies go untracked past the required completion window.
- Destroying records without checking the retention schedule first.

10. Revision history

| Revision | Date               | Description     | Reviewed by     |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1.0      | September 15, 2026 | Initial release | Ilia Pirozhenko |

Approval

| Prepared by | Approved by | Date |
|-------------|-------------|------|
|             |             |      |

*This is a template. Adapt it to your organization, equipment and local regulations before use.*



Scan for the latest version

Opens this template online, where you can download it again in Word, PDF, Excel or CSV — free, no sign-up.  
Or [add it to Perfect Wiki](#) so your team can find it and ask questions about it in Microsoft Teams, Slack, kChat or Mattermost.