

## CHAPTER 4

### Management of Health Record Services File Area

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#### I. POLICY

Health Record Services shall establish proper and adequate procedures to maintain an efficient and effective health record file service that ensures the ready availability of accurate and complete unit health records (UHR) for patient care. These procedures require promptness in filing UHR documents, consistent availability of patient records when needed, prompt delivery to the requester or user, and adequate control of records. Centralized health record services shall be employed to promote efficient use of available staff, equipment, and space. The file maintenance function shall be governed by policies and procedures, training of personnel, and adequate staffing.

#### II. PROCEDURE

##### A. The HRS Supervisor shall:

1. Provide employees access to the Health Record Services Policy and Procedure Manual.
2. Provide training on file maintenance to personnel.
3. Provide orientation, using the policies and procedures manual as an instruction book.
4. Provide ongoing staff development.
5. Establish a quality improvement program.
6. Ensure promptness in filing loose documents. Prompt means by the end of the next business day.
7. Ensure return of records by close of each business day.
8. Ensure enforcement of record locator system.
9. Ensure neatness of file folders and folder contents.

##### B. The HRS Supervisor monitors to ensure:

1. Limited access to the file area. Refer to policy: "Security of Health Record Service Area".
2. Maintenance of a clean, uncluttered, and safe area.
3. Proper lighting and ventilation.
4. Adequate air conditioning/control.
5. Sufficient equipment and supplies:
  - a) Ergonomically correct chairs
  - b) Sorting devices.
  - c) Desk trays.
  - d) Movable chart carts.
  - e) Work tables.
  - f) Telephones strategically located.
  - g) Clearly labeled shelving.

- h) File unit guides, representing the terminal and secondary digits of the terminal digit section.

### C. File Maintenance Rules

#### 1. Retrieval:

- a) Routine requests shall be delivered by specified time.
- b) Record requests shall be received at least 24 hours in advance.
- c) Records shall be retrieved during the first pass.
- d) Records retrieved shall be by priority status.
- e) Prompt retrieval and delivery of records shall be ensured for urgent and emergency requests.
- f) Prompt processing of non patient care requests shall be ensured.
- g) Elapsed time between receipt of the requests for patient-care purposes and arrival of the record in the appropriate location shall be recorded.
- h) All records removed from the centralized file area shall be charged out with sufficient information to locate the record at all times.
- i) Verify patient's name and CDC number each time the record is accessed.

#### 2. Filing:

- a) Outguides shall be used for loose filing.
- b) All records shall be checked in by the close of each business day.
- c) Upon arrival, UHRs shall be sorted immediately.
- d) All records shall be refiled by close of business. Refer to policy: "Retrieval of Unit Health Records".
- e) Folders exceeding 4 to 4-1/2 inches shall be divided into volumes. Folders shall reflect the number, e.g., Volume 2 of 2. Refer to policy: "Unit Health Record: Multi-Volume Records".
- f) Loose documents shall be secured into the correct section of the folder. There shall be no "drop filing." This is an unacceptable filing technique.
- g) Loose documents shall be sorted immediately. All loose documents shall be incorporated as soon as possible, having each day's filing completed by the end of the next business day, including mailing to other institutions if the patient has been transferred. Refer to policy: "File Maintenance: Loose Filing".
- h) Review each record handled for appropriate content organization. Refer to policy: "Unit Health Record Organization of Contents".
- i) Each record shall be reviewed at the time of its return for appropriate documentation elements.

### D. Maintenance of Folders:

- 1. Promptly repair or replace damaged or cluttered folders.
- 2. Exercise care to ensure all significant markings on older folders are forwarded to the new folder.
- 3. Consolidate all duplicate folders into the UHR folder.
- 4. Secure and properly file all loose documents.

5. Ensure that there is no documentation hanging out of the folder; properly file loose or dangling documents.
6. Handle record folders carefully.