

## CHAPTER 9

### Record Availability / Locator / Tracking System

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#### I. POLICY

Health Record Services (HRS) shall ensure that those patient UHRs in its possession are readily available. HRS shall establish a record locator/record tracking system (an outguide system) that shall immediately identify the current location of each UHR to ensure ready availability.

The UHRs received by HRS shall be entered into the record locator/tracking system upon admission to the institution. The record locator/tracking system shall be continuously updated whenever any record is removed from the centralized filing system for any reason, including discharge or transfer of the patient, "hot files", or deaths.

Each UHR removed from the centralized filing system shall be accurately monitored for its current location by name and location of the requester. The HRS staff shall charge out the requested and retrieved UHR, including requested multi-volume records, to the requester. When the UHR is returned to HRS, the UHR shall be charged in. All individuals who retrieve UHRs from centralized files shall use the system.

All patient records shall be returned and charged in by the close of each business day. This policy shall be monitored and enforced. The requester/receiver of the UHR shall be responsible for its return to HRS by the close of each business day, except for the inpatient unit. Records charged out to the inpatient unit shall adhere to these quality record tracking controls. Inpatient units shall ensure that all records are promptly returned to HRS at the time of the patient's discharge from inpatient status.

HRS shall provide a system to verify that UHRs have been charged out, charged back into the system, and promptly refiled. UHRs returned to HRS shall be refiled into the centralized filing system as soon as possible and prior to the close of each business day.

#### II. PROCEDURE

##### A. Health Record System Description:

1. Health records system shall allow HRS staff to:
  - a) Monitor the movement of the UHR.
  - b) Make a reservation for a single record, if the record is not immediately available to the requester, so that as the record is returned to centralized files, it is retrieved for the staff awaiting it.
  - c) Identify UHRs with duplicative scheduled appointments or conflicting assignments. UHRs shall be retrieved by priority status. The system shall identify the need for the record at more than one site.

- d) Require all requesters to immediately notify HRS of all UHRs removed from their custody.
- B. Receipt of UHRs:  
Enter into the record locator/tracking system all UHRs received or initiated. Use CDC Form 135, "Transfer Record," and daily movement listings for names of patients admitted to the institution.
- C. Retrieval, Charge Out, Monitoring Movement of Records:
1. If utilizing an outguide system, complete an outguide for any UHR removed from centralized files to track the movement of the record. For automated systems, charge out UHR to appropriate location.
    - a) Entries shall be made at the time the UHR is removed from the filing system. Charge out shall be made for every UHR removed from the filing system for any reason, even if it is for use within the department, including hot files, or deaths,.
  2. Retrieve the UHR. Refer to policy: "Retrieval of Unit Health Records" and enter the following information on the outguide:
    - a) Date record removed.
    - b) Requester's name and location where record is to be delivered. Be specific; use names of individuals and specific locations (e.g., Dr. Smith, emergency room).
    - c) If there is a second request for the record, flag the outguide by inserting a note in it, stating that a second request has been made for the record. Be specific; state who requested the record and where the record shall be delivered (e.g., Dr. Jones, B Clinic).
  3. Update the outguide whenever a record is picked up from one care provider and taken to another care provider.
    - a) Delete the previous requester from the outguide by drawing a line through the previous requester's name and location.
    - b) Charge out the record to the secondary requester; include specific name of requester and site to which the record was delivered.
- D. Charge In UHR Upon Return of Record:
1. Charge in all UHRs or update the outguides as records are returned to HRS.
  2. Note any reservations for the record. If a record is reserved, charge out the record to the requester using the charge out procedures above.
  3. Notify the courier service if the record is to be transported prior to the next scheduled delivery.
- E. Monitoring System:
1. Audit the record locator/tracking system for compliance with the charge out and return of the UHRs. Records shall be returned and charged in by the close of each business day.

2. Generate a report of records not returned and submit a copy of the report to the Health Care Manager.
3. Accumulate data for quality improvement purposes and for reporting compliance with this policy.