

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF MEDICAL INFORMATION	REFERENCE #2014
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APPROVED BY:	EFFECTIVE: 03/04/2025
	REVIEWED: 12/03/2025

## **POLICY:**

- To maintain patient privacy and confidentiality, medical information shall only be released to the patient and authorized individuals on an as need basis.
- A release of medical information form shall be used to document the request for and disposition of medical information.
- The medical record shall not be used in any manner that will jeopardize the interests of the patient, except that the hospital interests are priority when necessary to defend itself, or its agents, against accusations made by the patients or others.
- Medical records shall not be taken outside of the hospital, except upon receipt of a subpoena, court order, statute, specific written authorization of the administrative offices or for record completion when accompanied by Health Information Management Department personnel except as otherwise provided by law.
- Release of information to attorneys, insurance company investigators and physicians other than those caring for the patient for Worker's Compensation cases:
  - Medical records shall be inspected, or copies furnished, only upon receipt of written authorization signed and dated by the patient, guardian, if a minor, conservator if mentally incompetent, next of kin, administrator or executor, in case of death. The authorization and a statement as to date and type of information furnished shall be filed with the patient's medical record.
  - Identification must be shown by the party wishing to inspect the medical record.
  - A minimum charge of \$ 43.78 shall be made to insurance companies and attorneys wishing copies of the medical record with an additional fee of \$ 1.47 per page of the medical record that is copied.
- Release of Information to Medical Staff Physicians:
  - Members of the medical staff shall request that copies be sent to a referring physician, for which there will be no charge.
  - When a patient is readmitted to the hospital under the care of another physician, all previous medical records shall be made available to the current attending physician(s) and other consultant(s) involved in the patient's care.

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- Release of Information to Hospital Personnel:
  - Hospital personnel, including volunteers, inspect records only when necessary for their own routine departmental work.
  - Hospital personnel, including volunteers, shall inspect the medical records only upon signed, written authorization from the patient.
  - Hospital personnel, including volunteers, shall inspect the medical records of relatives only upon signed, written authorization from the patient.

Note: Student nurses must have authorization from their supervisor when asking for medical records for case studies.
- Release to FBI, Veterans Administration, Induction Centers, Armed Forces, State or National Government Agency:
  - Name of the patient, address and dates of admission and discharge shall be released without authorization.
  - It is not required that confidential information be released to governmental or police agencies without a subpoena or a written, signed authorization from the patient.
  - If a person desires to inspect medical records in the name of the above agencies and has proper authorization, identification must be verified. The requester shall also need to sign and date the authorization which has been signed by the patient. If copies are requested, there shall be no charge.
- Release of Information to Other Hospitals:
  - Information shall be released to other hospitals, without authorization, upon receipt of a request form from the hospital stating the patient is presently under their care in their institution.

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- Release of Information on a Patient Transferred to a Skilled Nursing Facility or Extended Care Facility:
  - Requires no authorization after the patient has been accepted by the receiving facility.
- Upon written request for copies of records from an employer, its insurance company, or its attorney, such request shall be honored, providing that the request states that a Worker's Compensation claim is pending. In this case, the patient's authorization is not required.
- Confidential Information:
  - Data or information from a record is considered confidential if it may have adverse effect upon an individual's family or hospital staff member. It may be information that:
    - Could be prejudicial to a person's mental or physical health
    - An individual could not be expected to fully understand or accept because it is contrary to his/her own views
    - Contains implications requiring explanation or interpretation to assist in its acceptance and assimilation in order to preclude misinterpretation, adverse reaction or retaliatory consequences toward reaction, or retaliatory consequences toward others.
    - Could be construed as personally embarrassing to an individual or a member of his/her family
    - Patient information that is considered "sensitive" shall require specific authorization from the patient to release and shall including the following (not all inclusive; refer to state laws):
      - ◆ Alcohol and drug treatment/referral
      - ◆ Sexually transmitted diseases
      - ◆ HIV/AIDS related treatments
      - ◆ Mental health diagnosis/treatments (other than psychotherapy notes)

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- ◆ Reproductive health treatments/procedures
- ◆ Genetic information
- For any additional information regarding release of medical information, please make reference to the current edition of the State Association of Hospitals and Health System Consent Manual. A copy of this manual is housed in administration and the Health Information Management Department.
- All medical record requests shall be logged upon receipt in the Correspondence Log. This will enable ease of answering telephone inquiries without pulling the patient's medical record. The information logged would be the patient's name, hospital number, the requester's name, the date of receipt of inquiry, the material sent, and the date mailed. This log shall be an alphabetical file in a notebook, for ease of access.
- The request shall be then verified for validity, checking signatures, dates, etc.
- The patient's medical information shall be processed according to the request on the Release of Medical Information form and forwarded to the copy service for processing. Medical records shall be photocopied for pick up, photocopied to be faxed or sent electronically. Please refer to Contracted Photocopiers policy and procedure.
- The original request and consent for release of information shall be filed in the patient's medical record.
- Upon completion of release of a medical record, the following information shall be documented in the Correspondence Log Book:
  - Date the information was released
  - Method the information was released by (i.e., hand delivered/picked up, faxed, electronically sent)
  - Name of person who picked up the medical record, as applicable
  - Signature of the persona releasing the information

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- Release of Information for External Database Reporting:
  - Aggregate patient information outcomes shall be released for external database reporting without prior consent when patient information is "de-identified". "De-identification" includes listing patient information in statistical format, without any identifying patient information. Aggregated information shall only be released for reporting of performance data. Only external database system vendors approved by the institution for use shall receive information. Only authorized personnel shall have access to the reporting system.