

**TITLE: OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF ORIGINAL MEDICAL RECORDS**

**POLICY:**

Original medical records, contain Protected Health Information (PHI) and are created or collected by and maintained by the healthcare practitioners at Columbia University Medical Center are the property and confidential asset of the CUMC

**PROCEDURES:**

This Policy describes the procedures required to assure the integrity of the original medical record.

**Access to a patient's records**

1. Access to a patient's records is limited to:
  - a. the patient;
  - b. the patient's health care providers;
  - c. Columbia University Medical Center personnel for treatment, payment, and health care operations purposes; and
  - d. individuals and entities who are authorized by law or by the patient's written authorization to access, view or disclose the medical record.
  
2. **Removal of medical record from Columbia University Medical Center**
  - a. Original medical record should be kept on the premises of Columbia University Medical Center.
  - b. Columbia University Medical Center permits copying records that are needed off Columbia University Medical Center premises for an authorized business purpose. Copies of original medical records must be protected and disposed of in accordance with Columbia University Medical Center policies and procedures.
  - c. If a court orders production of a patient's original records and original records are taken off the premises to comply with the court order, a records custodian or other representative of Columbia University Medical Center will accompany the original records and ensure their return.
  
3. **Disposition of original records upon departure of a health care provider**
  - a. When a health care provider retires, his/her patients will be notified in writing. A copy of the patient's record will be forwarded to the new health care provider upon receipt of a written patient authorization.
  - b. If a health care provider leaves Columbia University Medical Center to go to a new practice, his/her patients will be notified of his/her departure. The patient will be informed of the process to request that their medical records be sent to the provider at their new office or to another provider. The original medical record should be maintained by the department.

- c. It is the responsibility of the department to arrange for and copy the records of patients who elect to continue to receive care from the departing health care provider or another provider not associated with CUMC.

**4. Patient request for copies of their medical records**

- Refer to the Authorization to Release Medical Records Policy & Procedure

**Definitions**

***Protected Health Information*** is information about a patient, including demographic information that may identify a patient, that relates to the patient's past, present or future physical or mental health or condition, related health care services or payment for health care services.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Departments, HIPAA Privacy Officer

<b>ISSUED:</b>	<b>December 2003</b>
<b>REVIEWED:</b>	<b>October 2007</b>
<b>REVISED:</b>	<b>December 2009</b>