



Records Management

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Policy

The Regional One Health will establish policies and procedures for the creation, use, maintenance, retention, preservation and disposal of MED records.

Purpose

- To comply with all applicable laws and regulations mandating retention of certain types of records;
- To preserve all records that may be relevant to any ongoing or expected litigation, audits, or government investigations;
- To enhance organizational efficiency by ensuring that information of value to Regional One Health's business is preserved and readily accessible for appropriate periods of time;
- To reduce operational costs by expediting the process of locating needed records and eliminating the retention and storage of unneeded records;
- To ensure that records of no continuing value to Regional One Health's are periodically superseded or destroyed, and that all records destruction occurs in compliance with approved policies and procedures;
- To safeguard essential information of critical significance to Regional One Health's operations; and
- To ensure that records containing confidential or proprietary information will be securely maintained, controlled, and protected to prevent unauthorized access.

Process

DEFINITIONS

Record - Includes any recorded information, regardless of format or media. This includes, but is not limited to, documents, medical records, papers, letters, books, pamphlets, maps, photographs, microfilm, x-rays, drawings, charts, cards, audio or video recordings, magnetic tapes, e-mail, electronic images and information contained on computer disks, databases, or electronic file systems, whether duplicates or originals, that are generated and/or received in connection with MED business.

Contractor - Any authorized entity or individual that is engaged through contract or otherwise to perform services on behalf of Regional One Health.

Records Retention and Disposition Schedule - Identifies certain types of records that, for business and/or legal reasons, are subject to mandatory retention for a specified period of time. Records included shall be

maintained for the time period noted on the Records Retention and Disposition Schedule ("Retention Schedule").

General Retention Rule - All records not specifically identified by the Schedule may be discarded at any time, but may not be retained for longer than one year after creation or receipt. Drafts and informational copies of records are subject to this General Retention Rule ("Retention Rule") unless the Retention Schedule specifically provides otherwise. Instant messages and voicemail are most commonly used for transitory communication and are covered by the Retention Rule. Accordingly, employees should not use instant messages or voicemail to create records that have a specific retention period on the Schedule. For administrative purposes, Regional One Health may choose to retain instant messages, voicemail or other forms of transitory communication for a temporary period of time not to exceed one year.

Legal Hold Notice - A notice distributed by the Corporate Legal Department requiring retention of certain records that may be relevant to litigation, government investigations or audits. A legal Hold Notice ("Hold Notice") suspends all records management policies, to the extent that such policies would require or permit that affected records be discarded or destroyed. Once issued, a Hold Notice remains in effect until formally withdrawn by Corporate Legal department.

PROCEDURE

Applicable Documents

This policy applies to:

- All records created, received or maintained in the course of Regional One Health's business, regardless of the record's content or location.
- Records created or stored in an employee's "personal" working files, at an employee's home or on personally owned computers or personal digital assistants (PDAs) if the records were created or received in the course of MED business.
- Any record generated or received utilizing a MED system or resource (including company computers, email, fax machines, phones or software) and created or received in the course of MED business.
- Records created for The MED's use or benefit by third-party contractors or authorized agents.

Legally Required Suspension of Policy

This policy may be suspended in whole or in part at any time if circumstances arise (e.g. litigation, government investigations, or audits) which legally require the retention of records that might otherwise be subject to disposal. In the event that suspension of the policy is required, the Corporate Legal department will issue a Hold Notice to relevant employees concerning the nature and scope of the suspension. Destruction of records in violation of the Corporate Legal department instructions could result in prosecution for obstruction of justice or contempt of court.

Controlling Nature of Contract-related Retention Provisions

Regional One Health may enter into legally binding agreements, including business contracts, legal settlements or government consent orders, requiring Regional One Health to retain certain types of business records for specified periods of time. In the event that an agreement requires document retention in excess of the Retention Schedule, the longer retention period is controlling. Any questions concerning such agreements should be directed to the Corporate Legal department.

Oversight and Implementation

Regional One Health's Risk Manager will oversee implementation of this policy and will coordinate regular efforts to ensure compliance. Each department is responsible for implementing and maintaining Regional One Health's records management program within their area. Questions about the policy should be directed to the Corporate Legal or Compliance Department.

Compliance

The unauthorized destruction of records in violation of this policy is prohibited.

Compliance with this policy requires that employees:

- Determine whether they possess records that are subject to mandatory retention, as directed by the Retention Schedule or as required by a Hold Notice.
- Review records periodically to determine if they are being actively used by Regional One Health or whether they are inactive. Departments should send inactive records to designated off-site storage facilities or take other appropriate steps to store such records.
- Take steps to discard the following records that are not subject to ongoing retention requirements:
 - a. Those contained on the Retention Schedule which the retention period has expired; **and**
 - b. Those subject to the Retention Rule which have been maintained for more than one year.

Records Retention and Disposition Schedule Questions

Although Regional One Health is dedicated to maintaining a Retention Schedule that is comprehensive, accurate and current, in the event an important record category is omitted or the retention period is too short, they should contact Regional One Health's Corporate Legal or Compliance Department.

Reporting

Any employee who becomes aware of actual or potential litigation or other circumstances that could warrant suspension of this policy should promptly notify the Corporate Legal department.

Legal Penalties for Improper Document Alteration, Destruction or Concealment

Federal law provides that anyone who knowingly destroys, mutilates, conceals, or falsifies any record or tangible object with intent to impede, obstruct, or influence proceedings involving federal agencies or bankruptcy proceedings, or who otherwise attempts to alter records or other objects with the intent to impair the integrity or availability of the record or object to an official proceeding, may be fined and/or imprisoned.

Employees with questions about the legal propriety of destroying certain records should contact the Corporate Legal department before taking any action. Information pertaining to unauthorized destruction, removal or use of MED records or regarding falsification or inappropriate alteration of information in a record should be immediately reported to the Corporate Legal or Corporate Department or Regional One Health Compliance Hotline (1-800-750-4972).

Related Documents

Financial, Reporting and Billing Responsibilities
Office of Medical Research
Records Retention Schedule

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8/2/2011 6:05:46 PM