

SOP: Procedures for Handling Patient Record Requests and Disclosures

This SOP details **procedures for handling patient record requests and disclosures**, including verifying requestor identity, ensuring compliance with privacy regulations, documenting each request, obtaining necessary authorizations, securely transferring records, and maintaining confidentiality throughout the process. The goal is to protect patient privacy while facilitating timely and accurate access to medical information.

1. Purpose

To outline standardized procedures for managing patient record requests and disclosures to ensure privacy, accuracy, and compliance with all applicable regulations.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in processing, approving, and handling requests for patient medical records and related disclosures within the organization.

3. Responsibilities

- All staff must follow these procedures for record disclosures.
- Designated Privacy Officer oversees compliance and responds to any breaches or queries.

4. Procedure

1. Receive and Log Request

- Accept requests in writing (physical form, fax, or secure email) where possible.
- Log each request in the **Record Request Log** with date, time, requestor details, and type of request.

2. Verify Identity of Requestor

- For patients: Verify using approved identification (photo ID, date of birth, address confirmation).
- For representatives: Confirm authority with supporting documentation (power of attorney, legal letter, parental proof for minors).
- For external entities: Confirm legal basis (court order, insurance request with authorization, etc.) and contact details.

3. Ensure Compliance with Regulations

- Evaluate request per HIPAA/local privacy laws before proceeding.
- Consult the Privacy Officer for unusual or complex cases.

4. Documentation and Authorization

- Obtain required written authorization from the patient or legal representative before disclosure.
- Document receipt of authorization and attach to patient record file or electronic health record system.

5. Process and Disclose Records

- Only disclose the minimum necessary information to fulfill the request.
- Use secure channels for transferring records (encrypted email, secure patient portal, certified mail, or hand delivery).
- Document the method, date, and recipient of disclosure.

6. Maintain Confidentiality

- Ensure records are not left unattended, visible, or accessible to unauthorized personnel at any time.

7. Retain Request Documentation

- File all request forms, authorizations, and relevant correspondence in compliance with record retention policies.

5. Breach Reporting

Report any potential or actual unauthorized disclosures immediately to the Privacy Officer in accordance with the organization's incident response policy.

6. Training

- All employees handling patient information must receive annual training on privacy and record handling procedures.

7. Revision History

Version	Date	Description
1.0	2024-06-07	Initial SOP release