SOP Template: Patient File Organization and Document Indexing

This SOP describes the process for **patient file organization and document indexing**, detailing systematic methods for accurately categorizing, storing, and retrieving patient records. It includes guidelines for maintaining confidentiality, ensuring document integrity, implementing standardized indexing systems, and facilitating efficient access for healthcare providers to support timely and effective patient care.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures for organizing patient files and indexing documents to ensure accurate, efficient, and secure record keeping within the healthcare facility.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff responsible for handling, organizing, indexing, and retrieving patient records in both paper and electronic formats.

3. Responsibilities

- Health Information Management (HIM) staff: Proper file organization, document indexing, and maintaining confidentiality.
- Healthcare providers: Accurate documentation and correct filing/indexing of records.
- IT/Records administrators: Maintenance of electronic record systems and access rights.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Patient File	A collection of all documents related to a patient's care and treatment.
Document Indexing	The systematic process of categorizing and tagging records for quick retrieval.
Confidentiality	Ensuring patient information is accessible only to authorized personnel.
Integrity	Maintaining the accuracy and completeness of patient records.

5. Procedure

1. **File Creation and Identification**
   - Assign a unique patient identifier to each patient file on creation.
   - Label both physical and electronic files clearly with patient name, identifier, and date of birth.
2. **Document Classification and Indexing**
   - Sort documents into standardized categories (e.g., Admissions, Progress Notes, Diagnostics, Medications, Consents).
   - Index each document with relevant metadata: patient identifier, document type, date, author, and department.
   - Upload and tag electronic documents using the facility's document management system.
3. **File Organization and Storage**
   - Store physical files in secure, access-controlled locations; keep files alphabetically or numerically sorted.
   - Ensure electronic records are in secure, backed-up systems with role-based access controls.
4. **Document Retrieval**
   - Ensure an up-to-date index/database is maintained for both paper and electronic files.
   - Establish procedures for timely retrieval of records, with logging of access and retrieval/request activity.
5. **Confidentiality and Security**
   - Limit access to patient files to authorized personnel only.
   - Shred/destroy confidential information as per policy when records are no longer required.
   - Regularly review user access to electronic records.
6. **Quality Assurance and Audit**
   - Conduct periodic audits of file organization, indexing accuracy, and access logs.
   - Report and correct identified discrepancies promptly.

6. Related Documents

- Records Retention Policy
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Access Control Policy
- Data Protection Procedures

7. Revision History

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	2024-06-09	Initial draft	Your Name