

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Transfer and Release of Patient Records

This SOP details the **transfer and release of patient records procedure**, covering the steps for securely handling patient information, verifying authorization for record release, ensuring compliance with privacy regulations, documenting the transfer process, and maintaining accurate records of all transactions. The objective is to safeguard patient confidentiality while facilitating timely and accurate sharing of medical information between healthcare providers, patients, and authorized entities.

1. Purpose

To define the standardized process for transferring and releasing patient medical records while ensuring security, confidentiality, and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff handling patient records and all requests for the transfer or release of such records within this facility.

3. Responsibilities

- **Medical Records Staff:** Securely manage and transfer patient records and maintain accurate documentation of all transactions.
- **Healthcare Providers:** Ensure that release and transfer requests are legitimate and comply with applicable privacy regulations.
- **Compliance Officer:** Oversee adherence to legal and regulatory standards.

4. Procedure

1. **Request Receipt**
 - Receive written request for transfer/release of patient records (may be electronic or paper-based).
 - Verify that the request is complete and includes necessary identification and authorization documents.
2. **Authorization Verification**
 - Confirm that the individual/entity requesting records is authorized to do so (e.g., patient, legal guardian, another healthcare provider).
 - Check validity of any consent forms or legal mandates (such as subpoenas).
3. **Records Preparation**
 - Identify and collate requested patient records. Exclude information not covered by request or restricted by law.
 - Review records to ensure accuracy and completeness.
4. **Release and Transfer**
 - Choose a secure method of transfer (encrypted electronic delivery, secure mail, or hand-delivery).
 - Provide only the minimum necessary information required to fulfill the request.
 - If releasing in person, verify recipient's identity with government-issued photo ID.
5. **Documentation**
 - Log all details of the transfer, including patient name, type of records released, recipient information, method of release, date, and authorizing staff member.
 - Maintain a copy of the release/transfer documentation in the patient's file.
6. **Post-Release Review**
 - Periodically review released records to ensure compliance and address any discrepancies or unauthorized disclosures.

5. Compliance and Confidentiality

- Adhere to all relevant privacy laws and regulations (e.g., HIPAA, local statutes).
- Report and document any breaches or suspected breaches immediately per facility policy.

- Ensure staff are trained in privacy, confidentiality, and security practices.

6. Documentation Example

Patient Name	Date of Release	Recipient	Type of Records	Method	Staff Initials
Jane Doe	2024-06-12	Dr. Smith, ABC Clinic	Full Medical History	Encrypted Email	AB

7. Review and Revision

- This SOP must be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure ongoing compliance with legal standards and best practices.