

## **Ottawa County Health Department Medical Records Policy**

### **I. Purpose**

In response to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996, the health department has been faced with greater complexities when releasing medical records. In an effort to protect patient confidentiality, as well as comply with government regulations, the Ottawa County Health Department has developed a policy to ensure that confidential medical records are handled in a manner meeting all necessary guidelines.

### **II. Definition of Medical Record**

In accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, Section 3701.74, the Ottawa County Health Department defines a medical record as data that pertains to a patient's medical history, diagnosis, prognosis, or medical condition and that is generated and maintained by a health care provider in the process of the patient's health care treatment.

### **III. Record Request**

Medical records will be released only upon written request from the patient or patient's representative.

The Ottawa County Health Department will only release records that were created and maintained by the Ottawa County Health Department. We will not release records received from other health care providers.

All record requests must be submitted to the Health Commissioner or designee.

Within a reasonable period of time, the Health Commissioner or designee will prepare and make available for inspection and/or copy medical records.

### **VI. Fee for Copying of Medical Records**

The fee for letter/legal size paper copies in this office will be \$.50 per page plus postage (if applicable). Fees must be paid in advance before copies will be provided.

Individuals or organizations may request that documents be mailed to them via U.S. mail. They shall be charged the actual cost of the postage, in addition to the cost of copies prior to mailing.

Records will not be faxed to the requestor unless it is for continuity of care and they will only be faxed to Medical Provider.

Records not generated by this department may need to be obtained from the original source.

The following entities are entitled to one free copy of a medical record: the Bureau of Workers' Compensation; the Industrial Commission; the Department of Job and Family Services; and the patient or patient's personal representative if the medical record is necessary to support a claim for Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and the request is accompanied by documentation that a claim has been filed.

Medical providers requesting copies of a patient's medical record for continuity of care will not be charged a copy fee.

## **V. Retention Schedule**

Record Retention Schedule and Approval Process is performed under the guidelines of the Local Records Commission, the Ohio Historical Society and the Auditor of State. The office retention schedule is available upon request.