

Policy Title: Medical Record Access, Borrowing and Return

Campus	Alfred Health	Policy number:
Category	Information Management	Related Policy No.
Responsibility for Review	Director of Health Information Services	
Date Approved: June 2009		Review Date: June 2010

PURPOSE/EXPECTED OUTCOME:

This policy is intended to provide clear definitions and guidelines for the correct access, borrowing and return of Alfred, Caulfield and Sandringham medical records within Alfred Health. Adherence to the policy will minimise the number of occasions where medical records are unavailable for direct patient care and improve the response time in the provision of patient records for direct patient care.

Incidents involving missing medical records impact significantly on our ability to provide safe and effective patient care. Such incidents cause both patients and staff significant inconvenience and dissatisfaction. The incidence of missing medical records can be significantly reduced if all aspects of this policy are adhered to.

POLICY:

- The medical record access, borrowing and return policy is focussed primarily around patient care. While it is recognised that there are many uses for the medical record, the primary purpose of the medical record is to facilitate the quality and safety of patient care and so all access, borrowing and return guidelines are to support this primary purpose.
- Medical records are securely stored and maintained within Health Information Services (HIS).
- Medical records are only released from HIS for the purpose of direct or indirect patient care, as defined in the guidelines of this policy.
- All other access to medical records is to take place within HIS. Exceptions to this are limited to authorised research staff with “day only” loan privileges.
- The return of medical records to HIS following direct or indirect patient care is the responsibility of individual staff members who have requested the records. Beyond this, the department Manager, Head of Unit or Divisional Director in which the staff member is employed is responsible for the activities of these staff and the individual work practices undertaken by their staff.
- Medical records are returned to HIS in accordance with the time lines set out in the guidelines of this policy. HIS will monitor “overdue” records and report incidents and variances to the Department Manager for corrective action and follow-up.

RELATED GUIDELINES:

Alfred Health Medical Record Access, Borrowing and Return Guideline 2009.
Alfred Health Medical Record Transport Guideline 2009.

REFERENCES:

Health Records Act (2001).
Alfred Health Information Privacy Policy 2009.
ACHS EQuIP 4 Clinical Criteria 1.1.8 on Health Records and Support Criteria 2.3.1 on Records Management.