Retiring Incomplete Medical Records

Policy

The Department of Health Information Management (HIM) will strive to ensure that all medical records are completed within the time frames delineated in the *Bylaws of the Medical* Staff. If a healthcare provider permanently leaves UTMB without completing medical records, the medical records will be completed by any appropriate means or the records will be retired as incomplete pursuant to the authority of the Health Information Committee (HIC).

Procedure

If a physician leaves UTMB before completing hard copy medical records and can still be contacted, a copy of the incomplete portions of the record will be sent by registered mail to the physician for completion. A prepaid return envelope will be included and the physician will be asked to return the completed records within 72 hours of receipt.

If a physician leaves UTMB with incomplete electronic medical records and can be contacted, Information Services will be notified to reinstate the provider's Electronic Medical Record (EMR) access. HIM will arrange Epic access using the External Reviewer process. This process limits Epic access to the incomplete records that are assigned to the provider.

If the physician who left UTMB permanently cannot be reached and an alternate provider has or can be identified, the record (hard copy or EMR may be reassigned for completion.

If the original physician has died, cannot be contacted, or an alternate provider cannot be identified, the Director of Billing Compliance will be notified. The incomplete records will then be reviewed by the HIC which has the authority to remove the records from incomplete status and deem them suitable for permanent record storage. For inpatient, observation, and ambulatory surgery records, a statement to this effect will be placed at the front of the incomplete section in the hard copy medical record, or as an addendum to an electronic document in the EMR. For open ambulatory encounters, the Chief Medical Information Officer will administratively close the encounter.

If a release of information is requested regarding a retired incomplete medical record, HIM policy , *Disclosure of Medical Information 6.4.01*,

Procedure, continued

will govern.

Resources

IHOP Policy 6.7.28, *Access to Protected Health Information by External Entities*
IHOP Policy 6.4.01, *Disclosure of Medical Information*
IHOP Policy 9.2.9, *Delinquent Medical Record Management*