

Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures
Policy 09.02.21

Section: Clinical Policies	Responsible Vice President: EVP & CEO Health System
Subject: Patient Records	Responsible Entity: Health Information Management (HIM)

I. Title

Medical Record Number Assignment

II. Policy

The [Medical Record Number \(MRN\)](#) is the critical link between a patient and the patient's medical records. All *UTMB Health* staff responsible for patient registration must ensure that each patient receiving services at *UTMB Health* is assigned only one unique, permanent MRN. The correct assignment of a new MRN and retrieval of an existing MRN is critical to continuity of patient care. In addition, maintaining one unique MRN for a patient prevents the unnecessary duplication of clinical tests.

III. MRN Assignment Procedures

- A. The Epic [Enterprise Master Patient Index \(EMPI\)](#) is to be used to determine if a patient has been issued a permanent MRN.
- B. Before assigning a new MRN to a patient, an exhaustive search of the EMPI should occur. Tips for a thorough search can found on the [IHOP Policy Supporting Documents page](#).

Note: In accordance with IHOP Policy, 6.2.34 Use and Disclosure of Social Security Numbers (SSNs), patients with prior *UTMB Health* history for whom information cannot be located in the EMPI may be asked to provide their social security number. (This type of identifier can also ensure correct location of a patient if multiple patients with the same name exist in the EMPI).

- C. When the patient is located in the EMPI, select the patient and proceed with whatever process is required (e.g. registering the patient and / or scheduling an appointment).
- D. If after a thorough search, the patient is not located in the EMPI, proceed with generating a MRN and enter all the patient's demographic information into the EMPI. MRNs should **ONLY** be assigned when the patient is registered for care and / or scheduled for an appointment at *UTMB Health* for the first time.
- E. All names used by a patient should be entered into the EMPI. Usually the name predominately used by the patient is entered as the [primary name](#). Maiden names and nick names are entered as [alias names](#). If a patient prefers to use his/her middle name as their first name, enter their middle name as their first name and their first name as their middle name). (The system will retain both versions of the name, one as an alias).
- F. If, for billing purposes, a particular version of a patient's name is required, enter that name as the primary name and all other names used by the patient as alias names. In Epic's EMPI, when

adding insurance coverage, select “name on card;” this will keep the appropriate name for billing purposes.

- G.** If unsure which name to enter as the primary name, choose in this order:
1. The name as it is recorded with the patient’s insurance carrier (since some third party payers will not pay a claim if the name appears differently);
 2. The name as it appears on the photo identification provided by the patient;
 3. The name the patient prefers.

- H.** The information must be carefully entered so that the patient can be located in the EMPI for future encounters.

If a patient’s name changes, make the change by following the guidelines in IHOP Policy [9.13.10 Changing Patient Identifiers](#). In limited circumstances when the patient’s identity requires confidentiality, the patient may be registered/admitted under a fictitious name, in accordance with the IHOP Policy [9.13.10 Changing Patient Identifiers](#).

- I.** The Health Information Management (HIM) Department’s MPI Coordinator should be contacted if a patient is found to have more than one unique, permanent MRN.
- J.** The [HIM MPI Coordinator](#) will determine which MRN to use and where to attach any appointments, cases, or accounts. One of the MRNs will be scheduled for deletion (HIM will determine which number will be deleted); medical records combined, if necessary; and appropriate personnel notified of changes.

IV. Transgender Patients

- A.** To make a change to the gender of a transgender patient, one of the following documents are required:
1. Court document/decree
 2. Proof of surgical procedure

The primary name in Epic should match the name on their insurance card. The preferred name can be changed to reflect the patient’s wishes. Any additional names should be added as aliases.

V. Downtime Operations

- A.** When Epic is down/unavailable, MyUTMB should be searched to retrieve a patient’s MRN.
- B.** If a patient cannot be located in the EMPI, [HIM](#) is to be contacted.
- C.** The caller must be prepared to provide HIM with the patient information described at http://www.utmb.edu/policies_and_procedures/4334131
- D.** HIM will either retrieve an existing MRN from downtime sources available only to HIM or will issue the next available new downtime MRN.
- E.** Once Epic is operational, the registration personnel are responsible for updating and/or loading patient information into Epic.
- F.** Any questions regarding the EMPI should be directed to [HIM](#).

VI. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures

[IHOP - 09.13.10 - Changing Patient Identifiers](#)

VII. Dates Approved or Amended

<i>Originated: 0 6/28/2006</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Substantive Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Substantive Changes</i>
06/06/2014	11/18/2014
11/07/2017	

VIII. Contact Information

Health Information Management Department
 Master Patient Index Coordinator
 (409) 772-1744