



Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures

Policy 9.2.21

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 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. Procedures

- A. The Epic EMPI is to be used to determine if a patient has been issued an Enterprise ID number or a permanent MRN.
- B. Before assigning a new number to a patient, an exhaustive search of the EMPIs should occur. Tips for a thorough search can found at http://www.UTMBHealth.edu/policies_and_procedures/4334131

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, issuing an MRN or scheduling an appointment).
- D. Before issuing an MRN, if a patient has a previously assigned EID number, that EID must be selected and updated with current patient information. Only then can a permanent MRN can be assigned.
- E. If after a thorough search, the patient is not located in the EMPI, the patient’s demographic information should be entered into the EMPI.
- F. 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).

- G.** 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.
- H.** 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
- I.** The information must be carefully entered so that the patient can be located in the EMPIs for future encounters.
- J.** When the patient actually presents at *utmb Health* for the first time, an MRN is assigned. MRNs should ONLY be assigned when the patient presents for care.
- K.** 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 requiring the confidentiality of a patient's identity, the patient may be registered/admitted under a fictitious name, in accordance with the IHOP Policy [9.13.10 Changing Patient Identifiers](#)
- L.** The Health Information Management (HIM) Department's MPI Coordinator should be contacted if a patient is found to have one of the following:
 - Two unique permanent MRNs, or
 - One unique permanent MRN and an EID.
- M.** 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. **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://intranet.UTMBHealth.edu/Policies_And_Procedures/Search_Results/PNP_053537
- 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](#).

V. Definitions

Medical Record Number (MRN) (Previously known as Unit History Number UH#): Six digit number with an alpha suffix assigned to patients during their first visit to *utmb Health*. Each patient receives one MRN which is used each time the patient has an encounter at *utmb Health*. (MRNs are not assigned to specimens).

Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI): An electronic demographic database, residing in Epic, with information on all patients who have received services at *utmb Health*. It contains basic patient demographic information and the patient’s MRN and is a key to locating patient’s medical record information. It is not an index of legal identities but is an index of all identities used by patients.

Enterprise ID (EID): a number that is generated in Epic when a patient is added to the system without an MRN.

MyUTMB EPI: An additional database, which contains demographic information of patients who have received service at *utmb Health*. It contains basic patient demographic information and patient’s MRN. It is a key to locating patient’s medical record information. It is not an index of legal identities but is an index of all identities used by the patients.

Primary Name: the name the patient is currently using or the name required by the patient’s health insurance carrier.

Alias Name: the name(s) previously used by or assigned to a patient (e.g. maiden name, nickname, misspelled name accidentally entered into the EMPI, or trauma name).

VI. Related UTMB Policies and Procedures

[IHOP Policy 9.13.10, Changing Patient Identifiers](#)

VII. Dates Approved or Amended

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