

MERCYONE DUBUQUE MEDICAL CENTER MEDICAL STAFF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SECTION: Medical Staff

POLICY: Medical Records Policy

ISSUED: March 14, 1997

REVISION: June 18, 2002

REVIEWED: 7/04, 2/07, 3/10, 6/13, 7/16, 2/17, 11/19

DEVELOPED BY: Medical Staff Executive Committee

APPROVED BY: _____ President of the Medical Staff

APPROVED BY: _____ President

Purpose: To establish a mechanism to guarantee the timely completion of medical records.

Process:

1. On Tuesday of each week a letter is sent to each medical staff member who has four or more records ten days overdue or when any records are thirty days overdue. That letter contains the number of charts over ten days old or older and the number of suspensions the medical staff member has received within this twelve-month period.
2. A second letter will be sent out the following Tuesday if those medical records remain incomplete.
3. On Monday at 12:00 noon, if those records (now at least fifteen days overdue) are still incomplete, the medical staff member's admitting and elective scheduling privileges are suspended until the records are completed.
4. If the medical staff member has planned vacation, all records must be completed before vacation. If the medical staff member has not completed the records, he/she will receive a letter notifying them of the delinquent records that must be completed upon return.

Suspension:

5. Physician or designee will notify the HIM Department when his/her medical records have been completed.

6. HIM staff will confirm that all records have been completed and will notify the President and appropriate departments that admitting and scheduling privileges have been restored.

Policy:

1. The medical staff member with five temporary suspensions in any rolling twelve-month period will be required to meet personally with the Medical Staff Executive Committee to explain his/her position and agree to comply with the policy.
2. Suspensions following the meeting with the Medical Staff Executive Committee will automatically trigger the following:
 - (a) The sixth suspension within a twelve-month period will result in a one-week suspension of all admitting and scheduling privileges.
 - (b) The seventh suspension within a twelve-month period will result in a two-week suspension of all admitting and scheduling privileges.
 - (c) The eighth suspension within a twelve-month period will result in a four-week suspension of all admitting and scheduling privileges.
 - (d) Any further suspension will automatically trigger permanent suspension requiring reapplication to the medical staff.
3. Letters sent to medical staff members with five or more suspensions will be sent by the Medical Staff President with a copy to the Mercy President via certified mail with return receipt requested, which will require the medical staff member's signature.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING INCOMPLETE MEDICAL RECORDS

1. What is considered an overdue record?

Medical records that are 15 days or older are considered overdue. The age of the record is considered from the time it is made available to the physician for completion. For example, if the patient is discharge on the 12th, the record is received in the department on the 13th. It generally requires 3-4 days to process records and then it is entered into the chart monitor system and the count begins.

2. When do you notify me of overdue records? How Many times a month do I get notices?

On Tuesday of each week, a letter is sent to each medical staff member who has four or more records that are 10 days overdue, or any record that is 30 days overdue. Also, on Friday, a follow-up telephone call or email will be made to your office to remind you that the records need to be completed. If you come in and do only those records that are overdue and leave the remaining records, you could receive additional notices as the record ages.

3. How long do I have to complete the records once I am notified?

If you receive a notice of overdue medical records, you have until the following Monday at noon to complete the records.

4. Can I call the Health Information Management (HIM) department and request an extension if I cannot make the deadline?

The HIM department cannot grant an extension.

5. What happens when I go on vacation and records become overdue?

If you have notified the HIM department that you will be on vacation, all medical records must be completed prior to vacation. Once we have been notified, we will place any current records on hold until you return to stop the aging of the records.

6. What does it mean when I receive a temporary suspension for not completing my records by noon on Monday?

If you receive a notice of overdue records and they were not completed by noon the following Monday, a notice is sent to Admitting, Surgery, President of the Medical Staff and the Vice-President of Medical Services that your privileges have been temporarily suspended. The time period for this suspension is determined by how soon after this suspension has been issued by completing your medical records.

7. How many suspensions can I have?

You can have four suspensions within any twelve-month period. Once you have received your fifth suspension, you will be notified that you must meet with the Medical Staff Executive committee to discuss timely completion of your records.

8. What happens if I have additional suspensions after this meeting?

If you receive a sixth suspension following the meeting within the same twelve-month period, you will receive a one-week suspension of all admitting and scheduling privileges. A seventh suspension will result in a two-week suspension of privileges, and eighth suspension will result in a four-week suspension of privileges, and any further suspensions will automatically trigger permanent suspension requiring reapplication to the medical staff.

9. Why is it necessary to complete medical records in this timeframe?

Both Joint commission and Medicare require medical records to be completed within 30 days. This includes signature as well. Medicare can sanction both the hospital and the physician for failure to complete medical record within this timeframe. Joint commission will issue an automatic type I deficiency for excessive overdue records. Also, incomplete records can delay billing, responding to third part requests, and request from your own offices for information they may need for patient care or your billing.

10. If I only have signatures to do, why do I need to do these within this timeframe? A record should not be considered overdue if all the dictation is done.

Joint Commission and Medicare both consider a record incomplete if not signed within the 30-day timeframe.