



Hospital Pharmacy Record Retention

In health care facilities, the patient's health record or chart is the only official record of the patient's hospital stay. The college requires records to be maintained for 3 years. The Health Records department in hospitals, however, keeps records for at least 7 years and generally for a much greater length of time.

Clinical pharmacy records:

Original medication orders are part of the chart and are retained by the health care facility. Medication orders that are faxed to the pharmacy however are not part of the official patient hospital record. If notes are made on these records that support a pharmacist's decision with respect to the order, i.e., identification of the persons involved in processing the order, concerns with dosing, interactions, etc. or documentation that contact was made with the physician or other health care providers to discuss the pharmacist's concerns, then this information must be retained for at least 2 years (the statute of limitations for BC).

In litigation cases, the pharmacist may need the written information on the faxed copy of the order to support/defend a decision with respect to an order. It is prudent to retain the medication order copy of all medication incidents until the statute of limitations has expired or the litigation case has been concluded.

The pharmacy computer software system may also have the ability to accept clinical notes and these should be retained as long as the electronic record is stored in the system.

Outpatient prescriptions:

Outpatient prescriptions are to be retained for 3 years from the date the prescription was last filled or refilled.

Narcotic and controlled drug records:

Narcotic and controlled drug records are required by Health Canada to be retained for at least 2 years. However, the College requires that these records be retained for 3 years.

Other records:

Documentation showing the training, certification and quality assurance for each pharmacy technician who verifies non-sterile or sterile products, must be retained for at least 3 years.

Occupational and Health Safety Regulation of BC requires records of all workers who prepare or administer cytotoxic drugs, including the name of the drug(s) handled, and when practical, the number of preparations or administrations per week. Exposure records must be retained for the duration of employment plus 10 years, and training records for 3 years from the date the training occurred.