

Healthcare providers should take practical steps to ensure potential evidence (medical records, x-ray films, EKG monitor strips, etc) is properly protected, retained and stored. This would include at a minimum storage in a suitable place, adequate indexing and appropriate storage facilities. Such information should also be stored in a secure manner after hours and not be readily accessible to cleaning crews, security staff or anyone who may have access to the office.

To ensure essential record retention, we recommend the following:

- Release only copies of patient information
- Release only upon receipt of proper authorization
- Require patients to sign an acknowledgement of release of original films
- Establish a records retention policy

Records should be retained for the longest period of time required under any applicable statutes or regulations including Medicare/Medicaid regulations.

ProAssurance recommends medical records be retained indefinitely.

John R MacLennan CPCU RPLU/ MacLennan & Bain Insurance/ mbiprofessional.com