

REQUESTING HEALTH INFORMATION NOTICE

Requesting medical records can be an unfamiliar process for many people and we understand that you may have questions. In this notice, we will try to answer the most commonly asked questions, explain why we take the steps we do, and hopefully make the process as simple as possible.

If you need your medical records, maybe for a practitioner, insurance company, attorney, or even for your own records, you may come to the Health Information Management Department (Medical Records) for assistance. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) requires healthcare organizations to obtain a patient's authorization prior to releasing their protected health information.

Patients' 18 years of age or older are considered an adult and must sign an authorization themselves. In cases where the patient is unable to sign an authorization to release records, the family member or guardian will be asked to provide proof of authority (such as guardianship or health care proxy papers). If you or a family member are physically unable to come into the department, our authorization form is available through the St. Elizabeth Medical Center web site (www.stemc.org) or we can mail it to you.

HIPAA requires that an authorization contain several pertinent statements concerning your rights as a patient. NY State law requires that the patient specifically indicate the type of records they are allowing the facility to release – this especially applies to the release of sensitive records such as psychiatric /mental health, drug or alcohol abuse, and HIV records.

Once an authorization has been filled out and returned to the Health Information Management Department (Medical Records), processing can begin. NY State Public Health Law 18 requires us to obtain the attending physician's consent prior to releasing records to a patient or family member. It may take up to 10 days to receive a response from the physician. The request must also be logged, records retrieved and printed, and an invoice generated.

NY State Law allows healthcare providers to charge \$.75 per page for medical record copies. Records sent directly to a practitioner or healthcare facility are sent free of charge.

The Health Information Management Department can be contacted at any time for questions or concerns at 798-8389.

Thank You,
Health Information Management Department
St. Elizabeth Medical Center