

CHAPTER 10

Managing the Office Medical Records

REVIEW

Vocabulary Review

Matching

Match the key terms in the right column with the definitions in the left column by placing the letter of each correct answer in the space provided.

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|---|-------------------|
| _____ 1. Pullout drawers in which hanging file folders are hung | a. inactive files |
| _____ 2. Horizontal filing cabinets | b. vertical files |
| _____ 3. Reminder files | c. active files |
| _____ 4. Frequently used files | d. tickler files |
| _____ 5. Infrequently used files | e. lateral files |
| _____ 6. Files that are no longer consulted | f. closed files |

True or False

Decide whether each statement is true or false. In the space at the left, write T for true or F for false. On the lines provided, rewrite the false statements to make them true.

- _____ 7. If storage space is limited, there are a number of paperless options for storing files.

- _____ 8. No matter where you store files, you must consider the issue of safety as well as security.

- _____ 9. The rules of indexing state that all hyphenated names are always considered to be one name.

- _____ 10. HIPAA law requires that every covered entity have appropriate safeguards to ensure the protection of the patient's confidential health information.

- _____ 11. Physicians must keep all immunization records on file in the office for 2 years.

- _____ 12. In terminal digital filing, numbers are read from right to left.

- _____ 13. Horizontal file cabinets are also called lateral file cabinets.

- _____ 14. A records management system refers to the way patient records are created, filed, and maintained.
- _____ 15. Commercial records centers manage stored documents for medical practices.
- _____ 16. When inserting documents into folders already in place in the drawer, lift the folders up and out of the drawer.
- _____ 17. You should write the name of a patient on the tab of a file folder.
- _____ 18. It is not important to use a file guide as a placeholder to indicate that a file has been taken out of the filing system.
- _____ 19. The final step in the filing process is to store the files in the appropriate filing equipment.
- _____ 20. In an alphabetic filing system, files are placed in alphabetic order according to the patients' last names.
- _____ 21. Many legal consultants advise that doctors maintain patient records for at least 7 years to protect themselves against malpractice suits.
- _____ 22. A file that has been cross-referenced has been placed in more than one location.
- _____ 23. The American Medical Association, the American Hospital Association, and other groups generally suggest that doctors keep patient records for up to 10 years after a patient's final visit or contact.
- _____ 24. *Indexing* is another term for naming a file.

Content Review

Multiple Choice

In the space provided, write the letter of the choice that best completes each statement or answers each question.

- _____ 1. If you are unsure whether to cross-reference a file, the best policy is
- A. to not do it.
 - B. to do it.
 - C. to let someone else make the decision.
 - D. to not put the file away. Set the file on your desk.
 - E. to place the unlabeled file into the file cabinet or filing system.

- _____ 2. A numeric filing system
- A. is not used when patient confidentiality is especially important.
 - B. organizes records according to the patient's last name.
 - C. may include numbers that indicate where in the filing system a file can be found.
 - D. is the only practical system for a large practice.
- _____ 3. Use color-coding for files
- A. only when using a numeric filing system.
 - B. to identify files belonging to specific categories of patients.
 - C. only when you are using no other filing system.
 - D. to reduce the risk of misplacing files.
- _____ 4. For tickler files to work effectively, they must be
- A. kept in file folders.
 - B. kept in a file box
 - C. listed on a calendar
 - D. placed in the computer.
 - E. checked frequently.
- _____ 5. The *first* step in locating a misplaced file is to
- A. look for the color of the misfiled chart.
 - B. discuss it with the person in charge of the office.
 - C. check the doctor's office to see if it is on her desk.
 - D. check with the other employees.
 - E. determine the last time you knew the file's location.
- _____ 6. The medical records for patients who have died should be placed in which type of file?
- A. Active
 - B. Inactive
 - C. Closed
 - D. Reserved
- _____ 7. When files are organized in a variety of filing systems that place patient records one after the other in a pattern or an order, it is referred to as a
- A. sequential order.
 - B. labeled order.
 - C. tabbed order.
 - D. standard order.
- _____ 8. A new patient is
- A. always an infant.
 - B. a patient who has never been seen in the practice before.
 - C. a patient who has never been seen in the practice before or has not been seen by a physician in the same specialty in the practice in 3 years.
 - D. never a patient who transferred from another practice.
- _____ 9. To make the best use of a color filing system, you must
- A. use only bright colors.
 - B. use no more than 4 colors.
 - C. always color-code a file based on the age of the patient.
 - D. first identify the classifications that are important in your office.
 - E. never combine a color-coding system with any other filing system.

- _____ 10. Filing guidelines
- A. help you file more efficiently.
 - B. help you select a filing system.
 - C. identify who is responsible for all filing.
 - D. help you set up a tickler system.
- _____ 11. When selecting a commercial records center to assist with patient records, it is important to
- A. assess the monthly fee.
 - B. assess the location.
 - C. assess the system for retrieval and delivery of files.
 - D. All of the above
- _____ 12. Who can take an original patient medical record out of the medical office?
- A. The office manager
 - B. The medical assistant
 - C. The nurse
 - D. No one
 - E. The patient
- _____ 13. The proper order for the steps of filing is
- A. sort, inspect, code, index, and store.
 - B. store, inspect, index, code, and sort.
 - C. inspect, index, code, sort, and store.
 - D. index, inspect, code, sort, and store.
- _____ 14. Rotary circular files
- A. take up a lot of room and should only be used in a spacious office.
 - B. can only be operated manually.
 - C. are a good option when space is limited.
 - D. can only be operated electronically.
 - E. can be stored stacked on top of one another.

Sentence Completion

In the space provided, write the word or phrase that best completes each sentence.

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 15. Vertical files have a metal frame from which _____ are hung. | 15. _____ |
| 16. _____ can be skipped when filing patient records that have been previously filed. | 16. _____ |
| 17. To protect the confidentiality of patient records, always keep them in a(n) _____ area. | 17. _____ |
| 18. _____ are large envelope-style folders with tabs in which files can be stored temporarily. | 18. _____ |
| 19. When a record is filed in two or more places, it is _____. | 19. _____ |
| 20. If you need to keep some patient-related materials separate from the patient's medical record, you should create a(n) _____ file. | 20. _____ |
| 21. _____ is another term for naming a file. | 21. _____ |
| 22. When you put an identifying mark or phrase on a document to ensure that it is properly filed, you _____ it. | 22. _____ |

23. Placing files in a pattern or sequence is referred to as _____.

23. _____

Short Answer

Write the answer to each question on the lines provided.

24. Why is it important to completely remove a file from the drawer in order to file correctly?

25. When small documents have wording on both sides of the paper, how should they be filed?

26. What are two safety concerns when using filing equipment?

27. What is the purpose of the tabs on file folders, and why are they positioned in different places on the folders?

28. What is the purpose of the pockets on some out guides?

29. You should choose file guides with a different tab position than your folders to help them stand out. How far apart should you position guides?

30. Name the five steps in the filing process.

31. List four formats in which inactive and closed files can be stored.

32. Name and describe in detail the first step in filing.

33. Why is it important to post a written copy of the practice retention policy near the filing area?

34. Describe how supplemental files are different from primary medical records.

35. Describe the "Indexing" step in filing. What is included?

36. Describe the steps to follow if a file is misplaced.

Critical Thinking

Write the answer to each question on the lines provided.

1. Why is it important not to misplace patient files?

2. What are some of the things that could possibly occur as a result of a medical file being lost?

3. What filing system would you choose for a practice that has many patients who are celebrities? Explain.

4. How can color-coded patient files be helpful in the care and treatment of patients who have illnesses such as diabetes or HIV?

5. Who might be impacted when a medical file is mismanaged or lost?

APPLICATION

Follow the directions for each application.

1. Creating a Patient Filing System

Work in groups of four students. Within your group, choose partners to work together.

- With your partner, prepare a list of 15 hypothetical patients—complete with full names, ages, and primary ailments. Exchange patient lists with the other pair of students in your group.
- With your partner, analyze the patient list you have been given. Determine what kind of filing system, alphabetic or numeric, is appropriate.
- Organize the patients' names as you would for the filing system you have chosen. If you have chosen the alphabetic system, write each name on a different index card and organize the cards. If you have chosen the numeric system, create a master list that shows the numbers and the corresponding patient names.
- Assume that your patient list is part of a much larger filing system that contains a similar mix of patients. Color-code your filing system. With your partner, decide what categories of information you need to identify through color-coding. Then assign colors to your patient list as appropriate.
- After you have completed your filing system, meet with the other pair of students in your group and compare filing systems. How are they different? How are they alike? Each pair should evaluate the other pair's filing system for appropriateness and accuracy. Pairs should be able to justify their choices.
- Form different groups of four students. Exchange your original patient list with a different pair of students and repeat steps **b** through **e**.

2. Setting Up a Tickler File

Work with two partners. Two of you are medical assistants in charge of setting up a tickler file. The third partner is an evaluator.

- On the chalkboard, each student in the class should list one important date or activity that he needs to be reminded of weekly, monthly, or annually.
- Working together, the two medical assistants should analyze the reminder information to be included in the tickler file. Decide how you will organize the tickler file. Will you use file folders, a wall chart, a calendar, a binder, or a computer file? Create the tickler file.
- Have the evaluator critique the tickler file. Her critique should answer these questions: Has any information been overlooked, misplaced, or duplicated? Is the tickler file accurate? Will it help in the day-to-day workings of an office?

- d. As a group, discuss the evaluator's comments, noting the strengths and weaknesses of the tickler file as well as its accuracy and completeness.
- e. Exchange roles and repeat the activity, choosing a different way of organizing the tickler file.
- f. Exchange roles again so that each member of the group has an opportunity to set up and evaluate a tickler file.

CASE STUDIES

Write your response to each case study on the lines provided.

Case 1

You are in charge of the patient filing system for an office with four doctors. The system seems efficient, except that there is no way of knowing who has removed a particular file. You have had to go on numerous searches for missing files only to find them on someone's desk. What change could you make to the system to reduce the need to search the office for missing files?

Case 2

You have a new job. On your first day you learn that no one has filed in weeks. Medical records are stacked on the floor. No one in the office can find what they need and the physicians are complaining. You are told that there are at least two lost records. What do you do?

Case 3

You have noticed that the patient files in your office contain medical records going back many years. It is becoming increasingly difficult to sort through all the documents and locate current medical information in a file. What can be done to solve this problem?

Case 4

Your medical office stores all inactive medical records in cardboard boxes in an area next to the furnace and hot water heater. The boxes are stacked on top of each other in tightly packed rows. The boxes are numbered but it is not possible to read the numbering because there are so many boxes in the small room. The boxes are sitting directly on the floor and are stacked almost to the ceiling. What suggestions would you make to improve this situation?
