CLINICAL RECORDS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS RE: RESEARCH

Clinical Records is responsible for the collection, retention, release and analysis of hospital medical records.

Department overview

- Transcription provides typing and editing services for professional staff to ensure timely and accurate information for dictated reports.
- Health information Management (HIM) professionals provide support for release of information, analysis and code all ER, Surgical Daycare and Inpatient cases as well as some limited clinical cases (Chemo and Renal). This coded data is submitted to CIHI and is used by the Ministry of Health. Funding allocations are often linked to coded data.
- Clerical staff members provide support for the organization and work with both the electronic and paper legal medical records.
- Clinical Records Supervisor provides report writing services, data analysis and monitors coded data for accuracy and timely completion.
- Clinical Records Manager provides resource approval for proposed Research studies prior to initiation of research to ensure the department has the capacity to support each study and works closely with Medical Affairs and REB as needed.

All areas of Clinical Records support and facilitate research initiatives at NBRHC.

Requirements for Researchers

- There are often multiple people working on the same study, so it is critical to assign one person to be the clearly defined contact person for Clinical Records Manager and Supervisor.
- No Personal Health Information (PHI) can be sent via email to any email addresses outside of the nbrhc.on.ca email group
- No patient specific information (chart listings) can be released to researchers without organizational authorization. Clinical Records can provide generic data (Example: total number of patients admitted with hip fracture in Fiscal 2015) prior to organizational approval for the purposes of study planning or feasibility studies.
- Any email communication with Clinical Records Manager or Supervisor should include the REB # of the project in the email subject line
- Access to the electronic medical record is via the Echart Desktop. Access is limited to only the visits that have been identified for the research project and EMR access in Expanse is not permitted. If you are a clinician who already works in Expanse in a professional capacity, this will mean that you may have to access the clinical documentation in a manner that is different from your routine desktop. Research access is limited due to the organization's responsibility to only provide access to the information that is required for research purposes.

- Once the clinical Records department has provided the primary contact with the patient chart listing, the responsibility of holding this PHI in a secure and confidential manner rests with the researcher
- Please note that Clinical Records will not be able to release the information until the PHIPA agreement and confidentiality forms have been signed. Please see the North Bay Regional Health Centre Instructions for use: PHIPA Research Agreement for further details.

Turn-Around Times

- Clinical Records provides support to researchers on a "first come, first-served" basis. There may be periods throughout the year when high volumes of already approved studies prevent Clinical Records from support new initiation of research for a certain period of time. If Clinical Records cannot support new projects due to workload this may cause delays to these studies even if research authorization has been granted by the organization.
- Clinical Records requires a minimum of 14 calendar days to create reports (chart listings) for research projects
- NBRHC has a hybrid records, meaning that some visits will be paper based, some will be paper and electronic, some will be a combination of electronic and scanned documentation. Many paper charts are stored off-site, which means that Clerical staff require a minimum of 7 calendar days to pull associated paper records for chart review.
- Once the charts are ready for review, the Clinical Records Manager or Supervisor will email/call the primary contact associated with the research project and coordinate access to the patient listing and workstation availability if required.
- Research requiring access to Clinical Records can be completed Monday to Friday, 0700 - 1630