

POLICY & PROCEDURE: Patient Requests for Access to Health Information for Inspection and/or Copying

Section:
Privacy

Effective Date: April 14, 2003

Reviewed by:
Reviewed Date:

POLICY

Patients or their personal representatives have the right to request to inspect or obtain a copy of their health information.

PROCEDURE

- Lafayette County Health Department requires¹ and informs individuals that requests for access to personal health information must be made in writing.
- When a request for access to health information is received, it will be acted upon according to the following time frames:
- Within thirty (30) days if the requested information is maintained and accessible on site
- Within sixty (60) days if the requested information is maintained off site
- The time frames stated above may be extended one time for no more than thirty (30) days. If the extension is necessary, Lafayette County Health Department will provide the individual with a written statement that specifies the reason(s) for the delay and the date by which the individual may expect to receive access to the health information for inspection or to obtain a copy.
- Lafayette County Health Department maintains the health information that may be subject to requests for access for a period of six years from the date it was created or was last in effect, whichever is later.
- Lafayette County Health Department maintains the titles of the persons/offices responsible for receiving and processing requests for access for a period of six years.

¹ Please note that this is not a requirement of the Privacy Rule. However, asserting this requirement in the policy and procedure may be helpful for agencies in order to facilitate documenting and responding to requests for access to health information.

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When a request for access is denied

- The individual is given a statement written in plain language that explains the reasons for the denial decision and the individual's right to a review of the decision with an explanation of how to exercise this right
- To the extent possible, Lafayette County Health Department will grant access to other health information for which there were no grounds to deny access
- Lafayette County Health Department will designate a licensed health care professional, not involved in the original denial decision, to serve as a reviewing official and reevaluate the request for access if the individual requests such a review

When a request for access is accepted (in whole or in part)

- The individual is notified of the decision and may choose to inspect the health information, copy it, or both, in the form or format requested
- If the individual agrees, Lafayette County Health Department may provide a summary of the requested health information for an additional charge
- Lafayette County Health Department and the individual will arrange a mutually convenient time and place for the individual to inspect and/or obtain a copy of the requested information
- Lafayette County Health Department must mail a copy of the requested health information if the individual prefers this method of obtaining a copy

Fees charged by Lafayette County Health Department for access to health information

- Lafayette County Health Department charges a reasonable, cost-based fee for copying, labor and supplies (for instance, paper, computer disks, postage)
- No fee is charged for retrieving or handling the requested information or for processing the individual's request for access to their health information
- Lafayette County Health Department may charge a nominal fee for preparing an explanation or summary of the requested information if the individual is informed of and agrees to receiving a summary of the information and is willing to pay the fee