

HIPAA HIGHLIGHTS

November 2025



Patient Record Access - Quick Reference Guide

What Staff Need to Know

Patients have the right to access their medical records under HIPAA and other federal laws. We must respond promptly and cannot create unnecessary barriers.

Two Types of Requests

Patient Access Request - Patient wants their own records or wants records sent to family/friend.

- Must be in writing (except for simple requests during visits).
- No special form required. URM and Affiliates does have a [form](#) available for use.
- Time limits exist for responding and providing records.

Patient Authorization - Third party (lawyer, life insurance company) wants records and asks patient to authorize.

- Not the same as a patient access request. Requires specific authorization form with 9 required elements, e.g. SH 48 or other similar form.

What Records Can Patients Access?

- Clinical notes and visit summaries
- Lab and imaging reports
- Billing information
- Any other documentation used for treatment decisions, e.g. images, flowsheets if requested.

How to Handle Requests



- Forward written access requests to HIM Department or Office Manager within 1 business day.
- If releasing from a clinical location, document what was released and when.
- Encourage use of MyChart for access, but accommodate reasonable format requests (electronic, paper, etc.).
- Work with your Privacy Officer if denial of access is considered.



- Delay unnecessarily.
- Require special forms for patient access requests.
- Require patients to use MyChart if they prefer another method.
- Deny access without valid exception.

When You're Unsure, Don't Delay! Contact:

- HIM Department: inforelease@urmc.rochester.edu or 585-275-2605
- [Your Privacy Officer](#)

Remember

Most patient requests should be honored. Denials are rare and require Privacy Officer review.

For information on this or other HIPAA-related topics, please refer to [URMC's HIPAA Intranet site](#) or contact your [Privacy Officer or HIPAA Security Official](#).