

SWEET MEDICAL CENTER POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL

ADMINISTRATION

CONFIDENTIALITY OF MEDICAL AND PATIENT INFORMATION:

Sweet Medical Center, Inc. is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy, and security of all patient and medical information.

All employees of SMC shall regard information about SMC's patients, clients, staff, or associates as confidential. Information regarding the patients' medical records, telephone conversations, family histories and diseases or illnesses restricted to SMC's professional and paraprofessional personnel, appropriate business associates or relatives or friends that directly participate in the care of the patient. Employees who violate this policy are subject to disciplinary action, including termination from employment.

Medical records will be kept in a secured records room. When medical records are kept in locations other than the medical records room, that location will be safeguarded by staff monitoring, locked doors, or by other such barriers deemed necessary. Diagnostic reports, such as laboratory and radiology reports, will be treated with the same level of confidentiality as a full medical record.

Additionally, every patient will complete required HIPAA paperwork and specifically authorize Sweet Medical Center, Inc. staff as to how they may be contacted and how whether information may be left on answering devices or with a family member. It is understood that authorization may not always be available in writing. If the patient clearly identifies to clinic staff whom they want information to be shared with, staff members may do so. Staff members will verify that authorization prior to leaving any personal health information with anyone other than the patient.

Computer systems containing medical or patient information will be protected by passwords, and every screen should be cleared completely before a computer is left unattended. Computers and patient files will be positioned to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

Patients will be interviewed and/or triaged in an area that provides auditory and visual privacy.

Staff members will not discuss patients' personal or medical information in public areas. Personal and medical information which is no longer needed will be disposed of by being shredded. No personal or medical information will be faxed without verification of the identify of the individual receiving the information.

All patient and medical records information will be retained for at least 6 years from the last encounter, from death, or from the 18th birthday of minor patients, as required by Montana law.

Any communication for medical records or information which is requested by an outside person or agency must have the patient's prior written consent or the consent of the patient's legal guardian. All such requests will be logged when received and when fulfilled. All external requests for medical information regarding SMC patients must be referred to the medical records supervisor for action.

Approved: _____
(Date)

Chair, Board of Directors