POLICY TITLE: Records Retention

Responsible Department: Office of General Counsel

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SUMMARY & PURPOSE:
The corporate Records of Baptist Health South Florida and its Affiliates are important assets. This policy is intended to provide a routine and orderly process for maintaining electronic and paper Records that need to be retained for legal, financial or operational purposes.

POLICY:
Records of Baptist Health, whether printed, written or electronic, must be maintained for the time periods set forth in the attached Schedule. Not all documents created in the course of Baptist health business are Records. No Record may be destroyed without written approval as set forth in this Policy. Records may only be destroyed in accordance with this Policy.

SCOPE/APPLICABILITY:
For audit and compliance records, also see BHSF Departmental Audit and Compliance Policy 816 Retention of Audit and Compliance Records. For laboratory records, specimens and slides refer to departmental policies. For retention and storage of patient medical records, see BHSF Departmental Health Information Management Policy 500 Retention and Storage of Medical Records.

PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE:
The Office of General Counsel will issue a records retention schedule (“Schedule”), which reflect BHSF’s effort to categorize Records and attach appropriate retention periods for classes of records. Legal and accounting standards are taken into account in promulgating the Schedule. The Schedule is attached to this Policy and is a part hereof.

Definition of a Record:
A “Record” is a written, printed or electronic document within a category described in the Schedule attached to this Policy. Patient medical records are not a “Record” for purposes of this policy.
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Not all documents created in the ordinary course of activities at Baptist Health are Records that must be maintained in accordance with the Schedule. For example, personal notes taken during a meeting are not Records subject to this Policy, unless the notes fall within one of the categories in the Schedule. Similarly, an e-mail or a letter is generally not a Record unless the subject matter of the e-mail or letter is such that it falls into one of the categories in the Schedule. Please note that any e-mail that must be retained as a Record should be saved outside the e-mail system as a formal Record. Except as subject to Hold Orders under BHSF Administrative Policy 451, e-mails are deleted after thirty (30) days in accordance with BHSF Administrative Policy 122 Authorization Providing for e-Mail Journaling.

Procedure for Destruction of Records:
Records that are older than the applicable retention periods set forth in the Schedule should be destroyed in accordance with this Policy, except that Records that pertain to actual or threatened litigation or an investigation must be safeguarded and should not be destroyed. Consult the Litigation Hold Policy, BHSF Policy No. 451, with regard to such Records.

The written approval of an entity Assistant Vice President or above should be obtained on the Records Destruction Authorization Form prior to destruction of any Records. The party who seeks to destroy Records should provide to the Vice President, or authorized designee, an inventory of the Records to be destroyed. The Vice President, or authorized designee, should confirm that Records as listed in the inventory are older than the applicable retention periods set forth in the Schedule. Approved inventories of destroyed Records should be maintained permanently.

Records approved for destruction should be shredded or destroyed in a manner that ensures that the confidentiality of protected health information or information confidential to Baptist Health is maintained.

For questions about the implementation of this Policy, please contact the Office of General Counsel.

SUPPORTING/REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION:
N/A

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND ASSOCIATED FORMS:
Attachment:
- Records Retention Schedule
- Records Destruction Authorization Form

Policies:
- BHSF Administrative Policy: 451 Document Hold Orders - Legal Services
- BHSF Administrative Policy: 122 Authorization Providing for e-Mail Journaling – Information Technology
- BHSF Departmental Policy: 816 Retention of Audit and Compliance Records - Audit and Compliance

ENFORCEMENT & SANCTIONS:
Violations of this policy may be referred to the appropriate HR management level. See HR policies 5250 and 5300 for applicable sanctions.