

**COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER  
OF EAST CENTRAL GEORGIA  
POLICY**

**SUBJECT:** Clinical Records Retention  
**POLICY NUMBER:** PIM 2.02  
**EFFECTIVE DATE:** September 1, 2003  
**RESCISSION DATE:**

---

<b>SUPERSEDES:</b> Policy # IM-16	<b>REVIEWED DATE:</b> September 1, 2003 <b>LAST REVISION DATE:</b> August 31, 2004
--------------------------------------	---

---

**POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Community Mental Health Center of East Central Georgia that closed records are maintained according to an approved numerical or alphabetic system.

**PROCEDURES:**

- I. All clinical records are maintained for a minimum of twenty-five years after the client is discharged or deceased.
  - A. After ten years of on-site maintenance, the CMHC may store records in alternate secured storage areas.
  - B. Schedules for transferring records to alternate storage areas are dictated by clinical records storage space considerations.
  - C. All clinical records are confidentially destroyed at the end of the twenty-five year period of storage.
  
- II The CMHC assures that the Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) will have access to clinical records for all CMHC clients enrolled in DHR's Mental Health/Mental Retardation Information System (MHMRIS).
  - A. In the event that the CMHC's business relationship with DHR is terminated the CMHC will retain records in accordance with section I of this policy.
  - B. In the event that the CMHC ceases business operation prior to the twenty-five year records closure date, the CMHC will transfer the complete clinical record of each DHR client to DHR.
  
- III Open records will need to be thinned:
  - A. Thinning procedures will vary depending upon the types of services in which clients are enrolled. Program Managers in consultation with the Clinical Director will develop record thinning procedures.
  - B. Information removed from the current volumes through thinning will be stored in separate record folders marked Volume I, Volume II, etc. And filed in an accessible manner.
  
- IV Unopened clinical records are defined as any communication, written, by telephone, or face-to-face, regarding an individual who could become a client but is not opened at the time through MH/MRIS. These records will be filed in a locked file cabinet or room. Accessibility will be the same as

addressed in Policy # 's PIM 3.03 and PIM 3.02. These will be kept a minimum of three years. After that time, they may be burned so that all identifying information is destroyed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CSB Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date