

RCW 70.41.190 Medical records of patients—Retention and preservation. (1) A hospital shall retain and preserve all medical records for a minimum period of 26 years from the date the record was created. A hospital may retain medical records on paper, microfilm, electronically, or on other media.

(a) This subsection applies to:

(i) Medical records created prior to July 27, 2025, and retained or preserved by the hospital on July 27, 2025; and

(ii) Medical records created on or after July 27, 2025.

(b) This subsection does not apply to medical records no longer retained and preserved by the hospital on July 27, 2025, if the hospital complied with this section as it existed prior to July 27, 2025, when it destroyed or otherwise disposed of the records.

(c) This subsection does not exempt hospitals from compliance with any other record retention requirements.

(2) All information collected at each unique visit is considered a medical record for the purposes of this section.

(3) If a hospital ceases operations, it shall make immediate arrangements, as approved by the department, for preservation of its records.

(4) The department shall by regulation define the type of records and the information required to be included in the medical records to be retained and preserved under this section; which records may be retained in photographic form pursuant to chapter 5.46 RCW. [2025 c 131 s 1; 1985 c 213 s 27; 1975 1st ex.s. c 175 s 1.]

Savings—Effective date—1985 c 213: See notes following RCW 43.20.050.

Medical records, disclosure: Chapter 70.02 RCW.