

34-12-15. Inmate records and statistics required of institutions--Copy to patient and certain other persons on request--Reproduction cost--No liability for compliance--Section not applicable to chemical dependency treatment facilities. All superintendents, or managers, or other persons in charge of hospitals, lying-in, or other institutions, public or private, to which persons resort for treatment of disease, confinement, or are committed by process of law, shall make and keep a record of all the personal and statistical particulars relative to the inmates, such record to be made at the time of their admittance and in such form of certificate as directed by the secretary of health. In case of persons admitted or committed for treatment of disease, the physician in charge shall specify for entry in such record the nature of the disease and where in the physician's opinion it was contracted. The personal particulars and information required by this section shall be obtained from the individual, if it is practicable to do so, and if not practicable, shall be obtained in as complete a manner as possible from relatives, friends, or other persons acquainted with the facts. Such record shall be open at all times to the inspection of the secretary of health or an accredited agent of the secretary.

A health care facility shall provide copies of all medical records, reports, and X rays pertinent to the health of the patient, if available, to a discharged patient or the patient's designee upon receipt by the health care facility of a written request or a legible copy of a written request signed by the patient. The health care facility may require before delivery that the patient pay the actual reproduction and mailing expense.

If a personal representative of a deceased patient has not been appointed, the following surviving family members, in the priority stated, have the right to copies of the patient's medical record to the same extent as the patient would have the right to copies of the medical record while alive:

- (1) The spouse, if not legally separated at the time of the patient's death;
- (2) An adult child;
- (3) A parent;
- (4) An adult sibling;
- (5) A grandparent or an adult grandchild;
- (6) An adult aunt or uncle, or an adult niece or nephew.

A health care facility, complying in good faith with the provisions of this section, may not be held liable for any injury or damage proximately resulting from compliance with this section. This section does not apply to chemical dependency treatment facilities.

**Source:** SDC 1939, § 27.0205; SL 1979, ch 236, § 1; SL 1981, ch 258, §§ 1, 2; SL 1989, ch 288; SL 1999, ch 171, § 1.

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