

**SOUTH CAROLINA BOARD OF DENTISTRY  
POLICY/PROCEDURE**

**PATIENT DENTAL RECORDS**

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. Sections 40-15-40 and 40-15-83; Board Regulation 39-11.1-B

**POLICY**

S.C. Code Ann. Section 40-15-40 authorizes the Board to adopt rules and regulations for its own organization and for the practice of dentistry, dental hygiene and the performance of dental technological work in this State. Board Regulation 39-11.1-B states, "Dentists are obliged to safeguard the confidentiality of patient records. Dentists shall maintain patient records in a manner consistent with the protection of the welfare of the patient. Upon request of a patient or another dental practitioner, dentists shall provide any information that will be beneficial for the future treatment of that patient."

**PROCEDURE**

Patient dental records must be maintained in such a manner that a subsequent treating dentist can readily ascertain the treatment provided by the performing dentist and include, at a minimum, documentation of:

1. Personal information;
2. Concise medical history;
3. All patient office visits and other consultations obtained;
4. All prescriptions written including date, type(s) of medications, and number (quantity) prescribed;
5. All therapeutic and diagnostic procedures performed;
6. All written patient instructions and written agreements;
7. Most recent dental charting and periodontal examination, if applicable;
8. Most recent full mouth radiographic survey or panograph, or detailed written report on radiographic finding in lieu of physical radiographs, if applicable;
9. Most recent bitewing radiographs, or a detailed written report on radiographic findings in lieu of physical radiographs, if applicable;
10. All pathology or medical laboratory reports, if applicable;
11. Anesthesia records, if applicable;
12. All initial orthodontic diagnostic records, including pretreatment study models, photographs, cephalometric radiographs and cephalometric analysis, if applicable, or a detailed written report in lieu of the physical records.
13. Correspondence with consultants or specialists, if applicable.
14. Treatment plan and progress notes.

Dental records are the property of the dentist who performs the dental service; however, a patient who requests his/her records shall have access to such records. Copies of patient records and/or x-rays, or summaries thereof, must be made available to the patient and/or new dentist upon submission of a written release authorization, in a reasonable manner and upon reasonable costs associated with providing such record. This obligation exists whether or not the patient's account is paid in full.

In accordance with Section 40-15-83, dentists shall retain their patient records for at least five (5) years. These minimum recordkeeping periods begin to run from the last date of treatment. After these minimum recordkeeping periods, the records may be destroyed. If a dentist is employed by a corporation or another dentist, the corporation or employing dentist is responsible for maintaining the patient records for a period of five (5) years. The practicing dentist shall have access to these patient records during that period.