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FM COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC

TO ALCOAST

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ALCOAST 191/25

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SUBJ: DIGITIZATION AND LONG-TERM STORAGE OF PAPER HEALTH RECORDS
UPDATE

A. Paper Health Records Data Digitization Procedural Guidance,
EHRAPMO-PG-23-002

1. This ALCOAST is to inform service members and healthcare staff of efforts to digitize legacy paper health records, clarifies the process for personnel to obtain copies of health records, and provides guidance to servicing Coast Guard clinics. This information is provided to increase awareness and assist communication between patients and healthcare staff to best support our service members.

2. STATUS OF THE PAPER HEALTH RECORD DIGITIZATION PROCESS: The effort to digitize paper health records began in November 2022 when over 45,000 paper health records were retrieved from clinics, sick bays, and Unit Record Custodians. The records are being digitized and uploaded into the Department of Defense Health Artifact and Image Solution (HAIMS) application which makes the records viewable in MHS GENESIS and accessible by the Department of Veterans Affairs for benefits delivery. In 2024, improved quality controls were implemented to address issues and streamline further digitization. As of February 2025, 40% of all paper health records have been digitized. The remaining paper health records are being processed for digitization, with efforts targeted to conclude before Q3 FY27.

3. AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH RECORDS FOR DELIVERY OF CARE: IAW REF (A), Electronic Health Records Acquisition (CG-9333) Program Management Office, with the assistance of the Health, Safety and Work-Life Service Center (HSWL SC), established a HIPAA-compliant process which enables viewing and availability of complete patient health records in order to deliver care throughout the digitization process. Provider access to patient health records is not impacted. The guidance for providers can be found on the following website: (Copy and Paste URL Below into Browser)

<https://uscg.sharepoint-mil.us/:b:/r/sites/cg9/3/3/eHRa/SiteAssets/SitePages/HomePage/Procedural-Guidance-Paper-Health-Record-v2.0.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=vQMum1>

4. PATIENT-INITIATED REQUESTS FOR HEALTH RECORDS:

a. Patients: Any patient in need of a copy of their paper health record should initiate the process by submitting a request to their servicing Coast Guard clinic. For prioritization status update and questions after confirming their servicing clinic forwarded that request to the digitization team, patients can email the paper records digitization team at SMB-COMDT-HealthRecords@uscg.mil.

Please note that all medical information created on MHS GENESIS after the CG-wide deployment of MHS GENESIS is already available for member viewing via MHS Genesis Patient Portal.

b. Clinics: Clinics receiving and prioritizing requests from patients shall first check the Joint Longitudinal Viewer (JLV) to determine if the health record has already been digitized prior to submitting prioritized requests for digitization. If the complete record is already available in JLV then the clinic shall follow guidance Record Request Job Aid, v2.0 to deliver a copy to the patient. If the complete health record is not in JLV, the clinic shall submit a records request to smb-comdt-ehra-logistics@uscg.mil containing patient name, DOD ID, and expected separation date; if applicable. After receiving the request from the clinic, the records digitization team will prioritize the request to review and prepare the record including a page-by-page review to protect patient privacy and comply with applicable federal law. Following this review the digitized record will be viewable in MHS GENESIS through the JLV application. If clinic personnel discover errors in the digitized record the following steps must be taken:

(1) Clinic point of contact sends email to: smb-comdt-ehra-logistics@uscg.mil; email will include the patients name, DOD ID, error explanation (example, "different patient's immunization record") and on which page/section of the digitized record. COMDT (CG-9333) will take for action, upload a new and correct copy, update the clinic's master file and send confirmation to the clinic POC.

(2) The clinic will securely transmit the digitized record to the patient via DoD SAFE. This is the only approved method of transmission. Additional information on the use of DoD SAFE can be sourced here:

(Copy and Paste URL below into browser)

<https://cnrj.cnmc.navy.mil/Portals/80/telework-info/SAFE%20FAQs.PDF>

c. Timeframes and priorities: Timeframes previously identified in REF (A) for digitizing records in response to member requests are now superseded by the revised priority groupings defined in this message. To ensure timely delivery of record copies, patients should contact their servicing Coast Guard clinic as soon as a need is identified. For prioritization status update and questions, members can email the paper records prioritization team at SMB-COMDT-HealthRecords@uscg.mil after confirming their servicing clinic submitted a priority request after confirming their servicing clinic submitted a priority request.

5. PRIORITIZATION OF REQUESTS FOR COPIES OF HEALTH RECORDS: Due to the increased number of patient requests for copies of paper health records, a prioritization process has been implemented to deliver the most urgent records first and comply with REF (A). All initial requests for records, including members in geographically remote units who do not receive their care at a Coast Guard clinic (often

referred to as the white space), must be submitted through the member's servicing Coast Guard clinic. The Coast Guard clinic shall apply a priority level based on the following criteria when sending a records request to the digitization team:

a. PRIORITY 1: Records for separated or retired members from the Coast Guard needed for Veterans Affairs (VA) claims.

b. PRIORITY 2: Records for members expected to separate from the Coast Guard within 180 days.

c. PRIORITY 3: Records for members requesting access to their health information, who are not within 180 days of separating from the Coast Guard, e.g. copy requests.

6. POC for eHRa: smb-comdt-ehra-logistics@uscg.mil

7. RADM P. JUNG, Assistant Commandant for Health, Safety and Work-Life (CG-1K), sends.

8. Internet release is authorized.