utmb Health

Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures Policy 09.13.10	
Section: 9 Clinical Policies	Responsible Vice President
Subject: General Procedures	Responsible Entity: Health Information Management

I. Title

Changing Patient Identifiers

II. Policy

The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) employees responsible for registering patients for inpatient, outpatient ambulatory, or emergency care should ensure that patient identifiers and demographics are updated as needed.

It is the responsibility of all patients being registered at a UTMB facility to provide all names by which they have been known in order to prevent the assignment of an additional MRN.

Any updates or corrections to patient identifiers must be entered into the Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI) as soon as possible. However, changing active patient identifiers must be done with caution. If any patient identifier change is necessary for an active patient, approval must be obtained from a Nurse Manager/Clinical Operations Administrator and the Pathology Department/Blood Bank Division before any changes are made. If approvals for a change are obtained one of three specific processes must be followed (described below under Procedure).

In circumstances requiring the confidentiality of a patient's identity, the patient may be registered / admitted under a fictitious name if approved by a Nurse Manager/Clinical Operations Administrator. The account will be amended at discharge to reflect the legal name.

III. Procedures

Any name assigned to a patient should remain in the EMPI to allow for the necessary cross-referencing to the unique MRN and associated medical information.

Any change to a patient's sex, date of birth, and/or MRN should be done as soon as possible once the error is identified and proper documentation is obtained, if appropriate (e.g., birth certificate, insurance card).

If an active patient's identifiers need to be changed and approvals from the Nurse Manager/Clinical Operations Administrator and Pathology Department/Blood Bank Division have been obtained one of the following processes will be followed:

- Changing a patient's legal name to a fictitious name (Attachment A)
- Changing a patient's name, sex and/or date of birth (Attachment B)
- Correcting a patient's MRN when a patient has more than one MRN (Attachment C)
- Correcting a patient's identifiers and separate medical record information when a patient has been registered/admitted with another patient's MRN (Attachment D)

IV. **Definitions**

<u>Active Patients</u>: Patients who are currently registered and receiving care in the Emergency Department, an Observation Unit, and Day Surgery Unit, as an inpatient or in an ambulatory environment.

<u>Alias name</u>: - The name(s) previously used by or assigned to a patient (e.g., maiden name, nickname, misspelled name accidentally entered into the Enterprise Master Patient Index (EMPI).

<u>Medical Record Number (MRN)</u>: Previously known as the Unit History number (UH#)
A six digit number with an alpha suffix assigned to UTMB Health patients (not specimens) during their first visit to UTMB Health. Each patient is to receive one number and this number is to be used each time the patient has an encounter with UTMB Health.

<u>Patient Demographics</u>: – Includes address, race, phone number, social security number, and preferred language, place of birth, mother's name, & mother's maiden name.

<u>Patient Identifiers</u>: – Includes name, MRN, sex, and date of birth

V. **Related UTMB Policies and Procedures**
IHOP - 09.02.21 - Medical Record Number Assignment
IHOP - 09.03.13 - Patients' Rights and Responsibilities

VI. Dates Approved or Amended

Originated: 9/26/1997	
Reviewed with Changes	*Reviewed without Changes*
	07/24/2012
08/12/2015	
	10/19/2015
	12/05/2018
	03/29/2022

VII. **Contact Information**
Health Information Management
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