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## More Answers to Your Medical Record Retention Questions

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Our article about medical record retention on September 5, 2008 generated a number of questions. This week we offer a few more of those questions and their answers.

**Q: We are a "cosmetic only" practice. Do we have to retain the records as advised?**

**A:** If your practice does not receive any federal funding through Medicare or Medi-Cal, or any other state or federal program, then you may be able to keep the medical records for a shorter time frame. You should speak with your physician and determine what policy should be put into place.

**Q: We have been on electronic medical records since approximately 1994. We have paper charts at a storage site. According to an article I just read, we can destroy records 10 years after the last time the patient was seen. If the patient is still being seen, but the recent records are on the electronic chart, can we destroy the old paper records?**

**A:** First, you should always keep all of the records of a current patient. Paper medical records may be shredded 10 years after a patient's last visit.

Secondly, if your current patient's paper records were scanned into the new electronic medical record, then you may shred the paper record. Scanning is a critical function of an EMR system. Once a record is scanned into a secure and appropriately backed up EMR, then it may be shredded.

**We would like to answer your questions! If you have questions or comments about any of our articles, please send them via the "Contact Us" link.**

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If you have any further questions, please use the "Contact Us" button to the left.

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