

Staff and Patient Notification

- Notify employees of office closure at a staff meeting.**
 - Prepare for alternate staffing in case employees leave before the closing date.
- Keep all employee, personnel, and training records as long as you keep patient medical records.**
- Review advanced practice employment, collaborative, and/or supervisory agreements. Act in compliance with federal and state laws and licensing agency requirements.**
- Notify patients of closing date. Include information about transferring medical records and a release of information form.**
 - Provide at least 60-90 days written notice by mail to each active patient's last known address.
 - Consider sending the notice by certified mail to patients who may have a medical condition or live where they could experience delays finding a new physician.
 - Place a copy of the certified letter in the medical record.
 - Document other attempts, such as phone calls, to notify the patient.
- Patients have a right to a copy of their medical record, subject to federal and state laws and regulations.**
 - Tell them how to get a copy of their medical record.
 - Under the HIPAA Privacy Rule, patients have a right to a copy of their medical record within 30 days of their request.
- Look for outstanding labs/tests and referrals. Notify patients of the need for follow-up. Help them make an appointment with their new physician.**
- Announce the office or practice closing on the practice's website, social media, and on signs in the office's reception and waiting areas.**
- In most cases, do not accept new patients once the closing date is determined.**
- Consider informing the public through local newspapers or media outlets.**
 - Check with your state's licensing agency for notice requirements.

- Fulfill your obligations under HIPAA.**
 - www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/guidance/access
- Include a HIPAA compliant Release of Information (ROI) form.**
 - ROI form should state that information provided may include:
 - Sexually transmitted disease, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
 - Behavioral or mental health services and treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.
 - Form should also specify:
 - Patient for whom authorization is made.
 - Healthcare provider or healthcare entity authorized to disclose this information.
 - Person or entity to receive and use this information.

Patient Record Retention

- Transfer or store records.**
 - Appoint a new custodian of practice records when necessary. Buyers or remaining partners may be willing to serve as the new custodian.
 - Choose a storage facility experienced in handling confidential patient information and HIPAA requirements.
- Ensure record retention for minimal amount of time.**
 - Adult – minimum of ten years after the last date of service.
 - Minor – until the age of majority, plus time mandated by state statute of limitations or a minimum of at least ten years after the last date of service.
- Agreements with new custodians and storage facilities must include a provision for the physician to access records after retiring/closing the practice.**
 - Reasons for access include requests by former patients for copies, Medicare/Medicaid or other third-party payer audits, other government audits, and medical professional liability claims.

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Additional Notifications

- Medical societies/associations, licensing boards, and credentialing agencies/departments**
- DEA, regarding plan to surrender DEA registration**
 - Blank prescription pads should be destroyed.
- Hospitals and facilities where physician has privileges**
- Referring physicians**
- Ancillary providers**
 - Labs, dialysis centers, and inpatient and outpatient radiology centers.
- CMS (Medicare and Medicaid)**
- Health insurance companies**
 - Notify where to send payments that resolve after the office closes.
- Medical supplies and medications**
 - Check with vendor about returning unused, unexpired medical supplies.
 - Check with drug company representative about returning unopened, unexpired sample medications.
- Review insurance policies for appropriate action.**
 - Employee benefit plans
 - Workers' compensation policies
 - Medical professional liability to ensure coverage for claims reported after the liability policy expires (tail).
 - Depending on policy conditions, you may qualify for tail at no additional cost.
 - Your ProAssurance Underwriter can assist you at 800-282-6242.

Business Considerations

- Office furniture and equipment**
- Review and cancel contracts:**
 - Managed care
 - Third-party payers
 - Answering service
 - Office suppliers
 - Cleaning service
 - Facility lease
- Tax returns, payroll taxes, and accounting records. Process accounts receivable.**
 - May need to consult other professionals:
 - Accountant
 - Personal attorney for important guidance
 - Collection agency for accounts receivable
 - Payers will need forwarding information to send payments
- Notify utility companies.**

Visit [ProAssurance.com/ClosingPractice](https://www.proassurance.com/closingpractice) for sample patient notification letters, an ROI form, and more information.

We're here to help.

Ask a Risk Resource Advisor at **844-223-9648**,
or **RiskAdvisor@ProAssurance.com**.
Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m., ET/CT

Find online resources available anytime at
[ProAssurance.com/ManagingRisk](https://www.proassurance.com/managingrisk)