

How long should I retain my patients' medical records in Georgia?

Just how long medical records should be kept depends upon the type of record, its potential use and specific legal requirements.

Georgia - By statute, the general rule is that medical records in the medical office (including any notes, lab reports and biopsy slides) must be maintained for at least 10 years from the date the item was created, usually the date of the last visit or treatment. Certain limited exceptions apply to the 10-year rule. By contrast, hospital records should be retained for at least 6 years after the patient's most recent discharge. Minor patients' records are handled differently; they should be maintained until the patient reaches their 27th birthday.

Finally, records should be kept indefinitely in riskier situations, including where there is an undesirable outcome, when a patient is unhappy with a result or any time a patient threatens or files a lawsuit.