

What is a Health Center medical record?

Medical records contain pertinent information regarding your health center interaction. This could include:

- Phone conversations
- Office visit records
- Laboratory/Radiology records
- E-mail correspondences
- Immunization records
- Medication log
- Referral/consult notes from other providers (if requested)
- Emergency Department records
- Insurance information

Medical records are kept in order to mark progress, identify trends or concerns, and serve as a medical history should the student transfer or see a different provider. Medical records are kept for 7 years after the student graduates, or 7 years after their last encounter with the health center. Medical records are shredded at the end of the 7 year period.

How is the Hope Health Center record regulated?

Medical records are regulated by the State of Michigan and by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

In Michigan, if there is evidence of clear and imminent danger of harm to self and/or others, a health care provider is legally required to report this information to the authorities responsible for ensuring safety.

Michigan state law requires that health care personnel who learn of, or strongly suspect, physical or sexual abuse or neglect of any person under 18 years of age must report this information to county child protection services.

Michigan state law requires health care personnel to report certain communicable diseases. This information is shared with medical staff at Ottawa County Health Department.

A court order, issued by a judge, may require the Hope Health Center staff to release information contained in records and/or require medical staff to testify in a court hearing. Efforts will be made to contact and to obtain permission for the release of this information prior to compliance with the court's request. If the student is no longer at Hope College, a letter informing the person of the request for the information will be sent to the last known permanent address listed with the college. If the student does not respond to attempts to contact them, then a decision will be made in consultation with both ethical and legal resources.

Medical records are classified as “treatment records” under FERPA and as such are excluded from the “educational records” regulation of FERPA. Hope Health Center medical records are kept separate from all other Hope College student records (both treatment records and educational records) and are considered to be the sole possession of the Medical Director of the Hope Health Center, Mark Stid, M.D. Medical records are kept in a locked and secure place when the health center is closed. Access to medical records is made only to the staff of the Hope Health Center.

Hope College Health Center is not a “covered entity” under HIPPA and is not regulated by the HIPPA Privacy Rule. Services are not provided to non-students and thus we are governed by FERPA standards. For this reason, only students who are currently enrolled at Hope College are able to use the services of the Hope Health Center.

How does a student access or share their medical record?

A student may access their Hope College Health Center medical record through the use of our Release of Information form, or produce a letter that includes the same information.

A release of information is a formal agreement between the student and the Hope Health Center. It includes specific information and allows for disclosure of private health information for specific purposes.

The following information is needed for a valid Release of Information:

- Description of the information that may be disclosed.
- Identified individual(s) who may disclose information and who may receive information.
- An expiration date.
- Signature of the student and a witness to the signature (not the person who will be receiving the information).
- A statement explaining the student’s right to revoke the release and the process for doing so.
- An understanding that the release was not signed under coercion or duress.

Why does the Hope Health Center not share information with parents?

There are several reasons that the Hope Health Center does not share information with parents unless the student has asked for information to be shared:

1. We want students to understand that as an adult their medical information is their personal information. We want students to share information truthfully without worries that the information will be shared with a parent.
2. We want students and parents to communicate with each other as adults. This may be a transition for some families, but we believe college is the perfect time to further develop trust and respect for each other. We hope families will discuss their attitudes and personal information and expectations of privacy and develop an understanding of how and why information might be shared.
3. We believe the student is the best person to share information with the parent.
4. We respect the laws of the State of Michigan.