

## **American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology Medical Record Retention Recommendations<sup>1</sup>**

This document establishes the recommendations of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) regarding the retention of medical records related to a patient's radiation treatment(s). This recommendation suggests the length of time that ASTRO believes its members should keep such medical records for each of their patients.

This statement of recommendations is required because radiation treatment may require several distinct courses of therapy over a patient's lifetime to the original site of treatment, or adjacent anatomic sites. This raises the potential of an increased risk of complications if a complete record is not available. Absence of records may also produce a need for dose reduction, and therefore, reduced treatment benefit. Clinical experience has demonstrated that radiation has long-term effects and that complications can arise more than a decade after therapy. Therefore, it is often critical to have an accurate record of prior radiation treatments, regardless of when they occurred.

For these reasons, accurate medical records documenting the specifics of each course of radiation should remain available during a patient's lifetime. Critical information includes records associated with treatment delivery, including but limited to, the target volume, total dose delivered and fractionation scheme. Such records are especially critical in the case of pediatric patients, in whose tissues, the effects of radiation can be seen throughout a lifetime.

It is the recommendation of ASTRO that medical records associated with radiation treatment should be preserved for a minimum of five years after the patient's death. This includes all of the radiation oncologist's records, regardless of whether they are controlled by the radiation oncologist, a hospital, or other treatment facility.

The Recommendations of the American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) are not rules but attempt to define principles of practice which should generally produce high-quality radiation oncology care. Neither ASTRO nor any of its officers, directors, agents, employees, committee members or other representatives shall have any liability for any claim, whether founded or unfounded, of any kind whatsoever, including, but not limited to, any claim for costs and legal fees, arising from the use or failure to use these recommendations.

**<sup>1</sup>AS ALWAYS, STATE AND/OR LOCAL REGULATIONS REGARDING MEDICAL RECORD RETENTION SUPERSEDE ASTRO'S RECOMMENDATIONS.**