



**POLICY: RECORDS STORAGE AND RETENTION PROGRAM**

<b>Policy Type:</b> Operations	<b>Approval Date:</b> July 2023
<b>Sub-category:</b> Grant	<b>Amended:</b>
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**Preamble**

Registered midwives ceasing to practice or changing practices need to consider the storage of medical records. The BC College of Nurses and Midwives (BCCNM) requires medical records to be retained for a minimum period of 16 (sixteen) years from either the date of the last entry or from the age of majority (19 years of age in British Columbia), whichever is later (i.e., 35 years), except as otherwise required by law. (BCCNM, 2021, p. 3)

'When a midwife leaves a practice, the midwife may either retain copies of the medical records in which they documented care or formally transfer custody of these records to another midwife. The original records may be kept at the midwifery practice or taken with the leaving midwife provided that all midwives involved in the client's care have access to a complete record that is properly stored and secure.' (BCCNM, 2021, p. 4)

'Properly encrypted digital copies are the safest and least expensive way to maintain client records decades into the future. Past 30 years of storage, files (paper records) can often deteriorate and become extremely difficult to decipher.' (Vancouver Division of Family Practice, 2016)

**Purpose**

To provide MABC members with financial support to offset the costs of midwifery record storage and retention.

**Compensation Available**

**1) Retroactive reimbursement for paper record storage**

Members who have incurred costs related to paper record scanning, transport and storage can submit receipts to be reimbursed by the MABC.

**2) Paper record scanning and storage**

Members who no longer chart on paper but have past paper midwifery records in their possession may apply to the MABC to have these records digitalized and stored with MedRecords. The costs associated with paper record transport and storage are based on the number of bankers boxes needed to store the paper records. The MABC has negotiated a subsidised rate for the first three months (August 1, 2023 to October 31, 2023) of this program. Members submitting requests during this time will be eligible to have all costs covered.



**3) Electronic Medical Record (EMR) conversion and storage**

Members who have recently closed (after April 1, 2022) or are planning to close their practice are eligible to have the cost associated with electronic record conversion and storage covered by the MABC.

These members should contact the MABC at least six months before practice closure or as soon as possible.

Of note, upon ceasing practice, some EMR providers may not offer contracts shorter than one year. Were you to close your practice before the end of your contract, given EMR fees are usually associated with usage, you should be able to negotiate to pay the base contract fee only from the practice closure date. You will need your EMR contract to be active until your records are extracted.

**Compensation Limitations**

Were the demand for this program to exceed the funding available, the MABC may not be able to provide full reimbursement to members.

**References**

British Columbia College of Nurses & Midwives. (2021). *Policy on Medical Records* (pp. 1–6).  
[https://www.bccnm.ca/Documents/standards\\_practice/rm/RM\\_Policy\\_on\\_Medical\\_Records.pdf](https://www.bccnm.ca/Documents/standards_practice/rm/RM_Policy_on_Medical_Records.pdf)