



**Policy Name:** Clinical Documents by Electronic Signature Policy

**Effective Date:** 12/31/12

**Policy Primary:** DUHS Director Health Information Management

**Status:** Published

**Final Approval:**

**Approved by:** Date:

**Definitions:**

Electronic signature: A computer data compilation of any symbols or series of symbols executed, adopted or authorized by an individual to be the legally binding equivalent of the individual's handwritten signature.

Digital Signature: An electronic signature based upon cryptographic methods of originator authentication computed by using a set of rules and a set of parameters such that the identity of the signer and the integrity of the data can be verified.

Digitized Signature: Defined as a scanned signature.

**Provider:** An individual who has been granted clinical privileges at Duke University Hospital including but not limited to Physicians, Physician Assistants, and Nurse Practitioners.

**Level:**

**Personnel:**

**Competencies/Skills:**

**Required Resources:**

**Policy Statement:**

**Policy:**

The Chief Information Officer or designate and the Committee on Health Information Policies and Services (CHIPS) will approve the use of electronic signature technology when such technology serves as a form of authentication within the Duke University Hospital medical record. This policy encompasses Electronic Signature, Digital Signature and Digitized Signature.

Electronic signatures may be used to authenticate a clinical document. Use of the electronic signature will be restricted to the provider's patients and scope of practice.

The creation, modification, maintenance, or transmission of electronic medical records requires the design of procedures and controls to ensure authentication of identity, message integrity, non-repudiation, encryption and confidentiality. Prior to approving a request for use of electronic signature

technology, the individual seeking such approval will be required to complete a checklist demonstrating compliance with Duke University Hospital requirements for electronic signature use.

Duke University Hospital requirements for electronic signature include:

- Validation of systems to ensure accuracy, reliability, consistent intended performance, and the ability to discern invalid or altered records.
- Use of authority checks to ensure that only authorized individuals can use the system, electronically sign a record, access the operation or computer system input or output device, alter a record, or perform the operation at hand.
- Determination that persons who develop, maintain, or use electronic record/electronic signature systems have the education, training, and experience to perform their assigned tasks
- The establishment of, and adherence to, written policies that hold individuals accountable and responsible for actions initiated under their electronic signatures, in order to deter record and signature falsification.

Signed electronic records shall contain information associated with the signing that clearly indicates all of the following and must be visible either on screen or on a printed page:

- the printed name of the signer;
- the date and time when the signature was executed;
- the meaning (such as review, approval, responsibility, or authorship) associated with the signature. When the electronic signature does not denote authorship of the document, there is recognition that the signature reflects approval of document content.

Electronic signatures shall be linked to their respective electronic records to ensure that the signatures cannot be excised, copied, or otherwise transferred to falsify an electronic record by ordinary means.

Each electronic signature shall be unique to one individual and shall not be reused by, or reassigned to, anyone else. The uniqueness of the electronic signature is reflected through a combination of security measures that include log on identification, password and provider number.

Developed By: DUH Work Policy Group

Policy Primary: Director, Health Information Management

## **REFERENCES**

### **Citations:**

### **Policies:**

Clinical Documents by Electronic Signature Procedure

### **Authoritative Source:**



**Additional References:**

**Attachment Names:**

**Entities:**

DUH