



College of Veterinary Medicine Policies and Procedures

Subject: ***Medical Records: Deceased
Patient Communication***

Section: *Animal Health Center Administration*
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To Be Reviewed Yearly by: *Medical Records
Supervisor and AHC Manager and Director*
Source:
Cross Reference:

MEDICAL RECORDS- DECEASED PATIENT COMMUNICATION

Goals

~ Mississippi State University Animal Health Center has a specific system in place to ensure a deceased or lost patient is removed from the reminder process to prevent the client from receiving any future notices, reminders or telephone calls pertaining to the patient. Our aim is:

- ~ To prevent unnecessary painful communications to a client when their pet is deceased or lost
- ~ To give compassionate treatment to clients
- ~ To prevent reminders from being sent to clients (who may have heightened attachments to their former pet, and/or a history of unresolved losses, and/or a sense of responsibility for the pet's death or becoming lost) pertaining to their former pet
- ~ To improve the likelihood that the client will continue a relationship with the Animal Health Center

Oversight

Mississippi State University Animal Health Center Director is ultimately responsible for the Animal Health Center team member(s) assigned to ensure appropriate client communications regarding deceased or lost patients. Mississippi State University Animal Health Center Director will designate the Animal Health Center team member(s) who is/are responsible for the protocol.

Response

Mississippi State University Animal Health Center Director will solicit recommendations for action plans from the Animal Health Center team to prevent inappropriate client communications regarding deceased or lost patients. Mississippi State University Animal Health Center Director will create the appropriate process. These processes will address the monitoring of Animal Health Center team member performance and client communication as well as designating an Animal Health Center team member responsible for these.

Process

Animal Health Center team member(s) will research which reminders, callbacks, targeted mailings, etc. are sent to clients.

In the electronic medical record the patient is marked "deceased" or "inactive" to prevent any further mailings targeted at specific market segments of the patient base from being sent to the client. The electronic medical record is automatically marked "deceased" when charges for necropsy, cremation, and euthanasia hit the bill. Otherwise Medical Record Supervisor of Medical Records Assistant marks the patient deceased when notification of death/euthanasia is received or when a sympathy card is to be mailed to the client.

Timeframe

An Animal Health Center team member will determine the timeframe of when the patient should be made "inactive" or marked "deceased" and therefore removed from the reminder system, callbacks, and marketing system after the patient has died or is lost.

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