

## Optometry Coding & Billing Alert

### Reader Question: Get Patient's Signature on Records Transfers

**Question:** We were forced to discharge a patient. She paid for a copy of her medical record and brought it to another provider. The new physician later called us looking for more information on the patient. We determined that the patient removed specific information from her file, so we sent the missing records to the new doctor. Was this wrong?

Illinois Subscriber

**Answer:** From a medical professional standpoint, no. When you are transferring a chart to a new doctor, however, you send it directly to the new physician, rather than giving it to the patient. And if it is a transfer, you don't charge the patient for a copy of the chart. This way, you are assured the new physician receives the entire chart.

**Caveat:** Make sure you get a signed release from the patient before you send the notes over to the new physician.

**Best bet:** Check with your state's medical associations or with a healthcare attorney in your state to find out exactly what your state's laws require.