

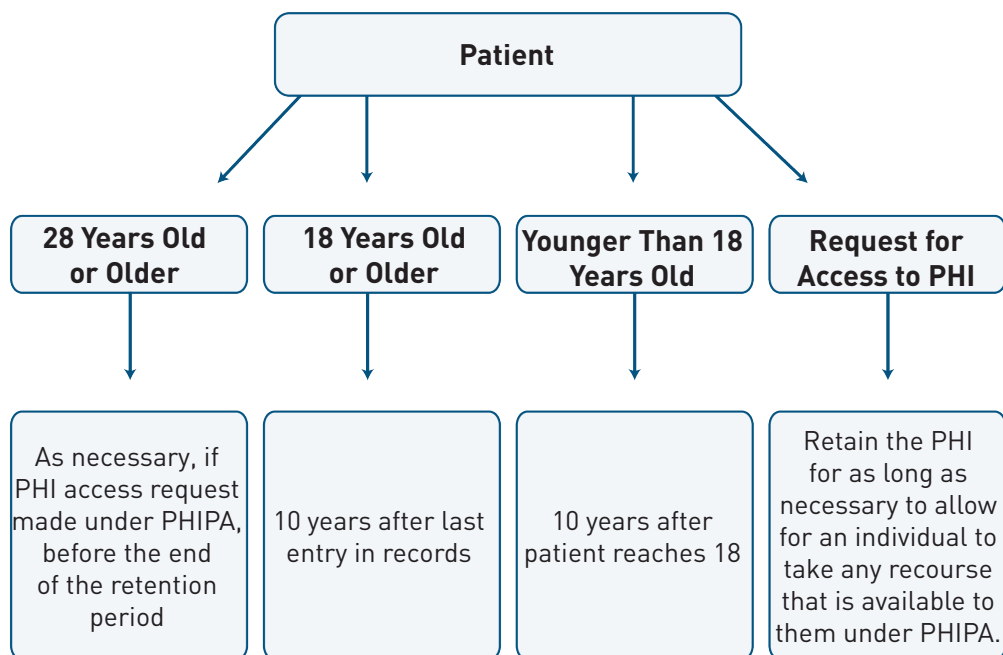
# Records Retention

Now that you have transitioned your patient records from paper to electronic records by introducing an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) to your practice, here are some guidelines and requirements to ensure patient care and appropriate record-keeping practices are sustained, and that patient personal health information remains protected.

## What is Records Retention?

- Records Retention is one of several components of Records Management, which refers to the lifecycle of records, from the point of creation to their secure disposal. Physicians, as Health Information Custodians, are responsible for ensuring effective patient record-keeping practices, as part of providing quality patient care. Legislation requires that practicing physicians retain the original patient records as summarized in the policy below.
- The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)'s Policy<sup>1</sup> sets out professional and legal obligations with regards to medical records, and specifically outlines basic requirements and guidelines for the access, security, storage, and retention periods of medical records to ensure continuity of care for patients.

## Regulatory Requirements



### CPSO Guidelines

The Limitations Act states that legal proceedings against physicians can be brought 15 years after the act or omission on which the claim took place. The CPSO recommends extending the retention to 15 years in the event of any legal proceedings being brought against a physician.

**For More Information:** [Info@OntarioMD.com](mailto:Info@OntarioMD.com) | [www.OntarioMD.ca](http://www.OntarioMD.ca)

<sup>1</sup>CPSO Policies #4-12, "Medical Records"