

Requirement of Notice to Patients: A retiring dentist or a dentist selling his/her dental practice must notify current and previous patients in advance of the retirement or sale. The dentist must notify all patients of record. Notice shall be sent to all current patients at least fourteen (14) days in advance to the last known addresses of the patients.

Form of Notice to Patients: At a minimum, notice shall include:

- The date that the sale or retirement shall become effective, and the date on which the dentist/patient relationship may resume, if applicable;
- A location at which the patient may receive emergency dental care for at least thirty (30) days following the termination of the dentist/patient relationship;
- A statement of further dental treatment required, if any; and
- A means for the patient to obtain a copy of his/her dental records.

Public Notice: The Board also suggests that a retiring dentist or dentist selling his/her practice announce the sale or retirement in a newspaper of general circulation in a county where s/he practiced at least once a week for at least four (4) weeks to contact patients whose records the dentist still maintains, even though those patients may not have visited the practice in the previous year.

Retention of Patient Records: A retiring dentist or a dentist selling his/her practice is not required to keep his/her patients' records for ten (10) years under O.C.G.A. §31-33-2(a)(1)(B)(i), but s/he shall not cause or permit the destruction of any patient's records without first providing not less than fourteen (14) days of notice to the patients records under Ga. Comp. R. & Regs. r. 150-8-.01. The Board suggests waiting a minimum of ninety (90) days to allow patients to obtain their records prior to any final disposition.

Destruction of Patient Records: The Georgia Board of Dentistry does not endorse a particular method of destruction of patient records.

Sale of Patient Records: Patient records should be transferred to the dentist of the patient's choice and/or to the patient, if the patient so requests. **At no time should a dentist transfer any patient's record to an unlicensed party.** Aside from a patient or his/her representative, only a dentist actively licensed in Georgia may control or maintain the custody of a patient's dental records.