Chapter Archive

The Pediatric History Center encourages Chapters to create their own archives in order to preserve the records of their activities for the future. These collections can be a valuable resource for the understanding of the profession of pediatrics and can provide researches with important resources about the history of child health care.

In order to help address questions of what to keep and how best to preserve their records, the Pediatric History Center has prepared the following guidelines for chapter administrators charged with the responsibility of creating or maintaining an archives.

Records Retention:

The following types of materials should be collected for your archives and permanently retained. They are valuable resources for preserving the history of an organization:

- Minutes and agenda books
- Newsletters
- Significant correspondence and emails documenting Chapter decision-making process
- General financial records
- Meeting programs/brochures
- Chapter reports
- Chapter publications
- Testimony by Chapter representatives before governmental organizations
- Articles about Chapter activities
- Posters and other artifacts
- Rosters of officers, committees, subcommittees, task forces, etc.
- Membership lists
- Lists of award winners, who won it and when and why.

- Records of Chapter educational programs
- Brochures and other announcements
- Member biographical information
- Photos, audio recordings, and video recordings (in all formats)

While it may be tempting to keep all records and you may find it difficult to weed your collection it is important to be able to recognize records of enduring value vs. those that you can destroy. Some types of records that should be retained only for the period required by law or business need include:

- Routine correspondence
- Routine financial records such as bills, invoices, cancelled checks
- Routine documents pertaining to meetings such as hotel brochures, etc.
- Personnel records
- Personal financial records such as credit card receipts

Preservation:

Paper: Store in acid-free folders in metal cabinets or in archival quality boxes on appropriate shelving. Use stock archival board and flat storage boxes for posters and other large documents. Newspaper articles should be photocopied on acid free paper or sprayed with a special preservative for preservation. It is important to try and keep your documents separated to prevent the spread of acid.

Photographic Materials: Store in mylar or polypropylene sleeves, NOT vinyl sleeves. Nitrate film should be isolated immediately and kept in a cool dark place. Professional recommendations should be sought.
Audiovisual: VHS and other magnetic tapes will disintegrate and should be migrated to another format as soon as possible. Old films may need to be professionally preserved, especially if a vinegar odor is noticeable.

Electronic Media: Floppy disks, CDs, DVDs and other electronic records must be migrated when there is a software or hardware change. All electronic media are subject to deterioration and technological obsolescence. Migration is not a single time end issue but is a process that must be considered as technology continues to evolve.

Supplies:

Popular vendors of archival quality supplies include:

- University Products: The Archival Company
- Gaylord Library Supplies
- Hollinger Metal Edge
- Conservation Resources International LLC.

Facilities:

Keep records in a fairly dry environment with moderate humidity. Ideal storage temperatures should be somewhat on the cool side and receive little exposure to light. CDs, DVDs and other electronic media need to be stored on edge in a stable cool environment that is not subject to wide temperature swings.

Assistance:

This guide has provided only the very basics for getting your archives started and for its preservation. For the best results you should consult a professional archivist. A local archivist may be available on a consulting basis. There are archivists all over the country, in colleges and universities, state historical societies, corporations, associations, hospitals, and other institutions. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) has members all over the country and there are also regional archival organizations. Contact the SAA at 312/606-0722.

The Pediatric History Center is also available to address your questions and to assist you in the development of your archives. Please contact us by either of the following:

call: 847/434-7093
email: history@aap.org