

Erie County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

Records

September 2008

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

I. **POLICY:**

The purpose of this policy is to facilitate the usage of electronic signatures for any and all records where applicable

II. **POLICY STATEMENT:**

Electronic signature, an automated function which replaces a handwritten signature with a system generated signature statement, will be utilized for records as a means for authentication of transcribed documents, computer generated documents and/or electronic entries. System generated electronic signatures are considered legally binding as a means to identify the author of record entries and confirm that the contents are what the author intended.

Employees and providers will be allowed to utilize electronic signature in accordance with this policy and state and federal regulations regarding such.

III. **PROCEDURE:**

A. APPROVAL

1. A separate Electronic Transaction Report or Form will be filled out for each similar transaction per state and federal laws and guidelines.

B. SECURITY

1. Security will be maintained through proper use of user logons, as described in the Automation System Policy 5.7.17. Password usage will be communicated through the Information Systems Department.

C. CREATING AND MAINTAINING AN ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

1. Electronic signatures can be used wherever handwritten signatures are used except where prohibited by a specific law or rule.
2. Users of electronic signatures are required to review their entries
3. Once an entry has been signed electronically, the computer system will prevent it from being deleted or altered. If errors are later found in the entry or if information must be added, this will be done by means of addendum to the original entry. The addendum should also be signed electronically and date/time stamped by the computer software.

D. AUDITING ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE PROCUDURES

1. The computer software and anyone using the software system must use a secure, computer-generated, time-stamped audit trail that records independently the date and time of user entries, including actions that create, modify or delete electronic records. Record changes shall not obscure previously recorded information. Audit trail documentation shall be retained for a period at least as long as that required for the record and shall be made available as needed upon request. Any misuse or disregard of electronic signature policy will be reviewed and acted upon by the Superintendent