

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230



OFFICE OF
INSPECTOR GENERAL

June 29, 2000

TO: The File

FROM: SA [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Case Closeout, #I-00030006

1. This case was opened on March 15, 2000 based on allegations that Dr. [REDACTED] the [REDACTED] employed by [REDACTED] had altered sections of the medical records of personnel in the [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] reported the allegations to the OIG and her concern that the allegations, if true, would represent a serious management issue. Specifically, the allegations were that information in the [REDACTED] of the patients' charts were changed in an improper manner: information was entirely obliterated with ink and, in one instance, changed with white-out. The nature of the information changed included lab results, test results, and medical clearances, and the information was allegedly changed so that the original information could not be discerned.
2. This case agent traveled to [REDACTED] in March 2000 and delivered a subpoena in person on March 29, 2000 to [REDACTED]. The subpoena covered the production of medical records of 41 individuals. On March 29-30, 2000, this agent reviewed 40 of those patient charts. This review revealed that information contained in the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was altered in numerous instances. The alterations were made in such a way so that it was impossible to determine who made the changes and what information was being obliterated. For example, the information was frequently entirely obliterated with scribbling. In one instance, a [REDACTED] was changed from "[REDACTED]" to "[REDACTED]" with the use of white-out.
3. This agent also interviewed two individuals, [REDACTED], who requested that their identities remain confidential. The individuals stated that, since the changes were made in the manner described above, they could not determine if the changes were made based on poor medical judgments or carelessness. They questioned the physicians failure to properly justify the changes he made; his failure to annotate the chart with a justification or supporting documentation; and his method of making the

changes in a manner so that it became impossible to determine the content of the originally recorded information. The individuals expressed that their primary concern is for the welfare of the patient. As such, they were troubled that an individual might [REDACTED] with a medical condition that should have disqualified him/her. However, since they were unable to determine the original information in the patients' charts due to the manner in which the changes were made, they were unable to determine if, in fact, the individual would have been [REDACTED] [REDACTED], [REDACTED].

4. In April 2000, Dr. [REDACTED] reviewed copies of approximately 20 medical records to which obliterating changes had been made. Dr. [REDACTED] concluded that the changes that had been made to the medical forms were made as a result of differences of opinion between the [REDACTED] nurses and Dr. [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] related that the [REDACTED] nurses and Dr. [REDACTED] had differing opinions on what tests were required or whether particular test results were disqualifying [REDACTED] the [REDACTED]. In an e-mail message dated June 5, 2000 to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stated that the changes did not appear to be malicious, did not involve actual data submitted by the patient, and appeared to affect the [REDACTED] administrative sections only (of the patients' charts).
5. On April 27, 2000, Dr. [REDACTED] reviewed this practice of obliterating some of the administrative information on the [REDACTED] forms with the new NSF support contractor, [REDACTED], specifically, Dr. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Dr. [REDACTED] related that if such notations had to be made in the future, then all changes needed to be auditable, for example, original information not obliterated; any changes noted by date/person making changes.
6. In the same e-mail message of June 5, 2000, Dr. [REDACTED] stated that, based on his review of the information, he believed that the administrative aspects of the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] have been modified appropriately to minimize these problems from recurring in the future.
7. Based on the OIG of review of the medical charts, interviews of the parties described, and the information as stated above, no further action by the OIG is necessary at this time. This case is closed. [REDACTED]