

# Mobile County Health Department



## Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority

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# Functional and Organizational Analysis of the Mobile County Health Department

## Sources of Information

- Representatives of the Mobile County Health Department
- Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-3-1 through 22-3-12
- Mobile County Health Department Annual Reports
- Records Dispositions Authority Files, Alabama Department of Archives and History
  - County Departments of Health
  - Jefferson County Department of Health
  - State Department of Public Health
- “Alabama Department of Public Health Annual Report 2017.” Alabama Public Health, Alabama Department of Public Health, Oct. 2017, [www.alabamapublichealth.gov/publications/assets/annualreport2017.pdf](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/publications/assets/annualreport2017.pdf).
- “Miller v. Mobile County Bd. of Health.” Justia US Law, Justia, 2018, [law.justia.com/cases/alabama/supreme-court/1981/409-so-2d-420-1.html](http://law.justia.com/cases/alabama/supreme-court/1981/409-so-2d-420-1.html).
- Website of the Mobile County Health Department: [www.mchd.org](http://www.mchd.org)
- World Health Organization. “Vector Control.” *World Health Organization*, Sept. 2018, [www.who.int/vector-control/en/](http://www.who.int/vector-control/en/).

## Historical Context

The Mississippi Territory Board of Health was established in 1816 and had an office located in Mobile. This office would become the first health department in Alabama when the state was founded in 1819. No other healthcare authority would be established in the state for several decades.

By the turn of the twentieth century, three separate boards of health were functioning in Mobile County: in the city of Mobile, the city of Citronelle, and the county at large. A single health department for countywide services was established from a merger of the three agencies on January 1, 1919. The newly combined Board of Health located to 119 Conti Street in Mobile, remaining there until 1957, when the board moved to 248 Cox Street.

On December 1, 1974, the Mobile County Board of Health (the supervisory board of the Mobile County Health Department) signed a lease/purchase agreement with a local chapter of the Tuberculosis Association (now called the American Lung Association). The agreement permitted the Mobile County Health Department to relocate most of its medical and social service offerings to the U.S. Marine Hospital on 850 St. Anthony St. In 1984, the hospital was rededicated as the Major General William C. Gorgas Clinic, after a Mobile native who became Surgeon General of the U.S. Army during World War I.

## Agency Organization

The department is supervised by the Mobile County Board of Health (also referred to as “the Board”), which is composed of six (6) members elected by the Mobile County Medical Society and a seventh member, the president of the Mobile County Commission.

Under the authority of the Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-3-2, the Mobile County Board of Health elects a health officer for the Mobile County Health Department (referred to as “MCHD”), subject to the approval of the State Committee of Public Health.

The department is made up of three directorates: Administrative Services, Prevention and Wellness, and Family Health Clinical Services. The Administrative Services directorate encompasses the Bureaus of Administrative Services; Finance; and Human Resources. The Prevention and Wellness directorate encompasses the Bureaus of Community Prevention; Communicable Diseases and Support Services; Environmental Health and Preparedness; and the Office of Communications. The Family Health Clinical Services directorate encompasses the Health Services Administration; the Family Oriented Primary Healthcare Governing Council; and the Clinical Review Committee.

The department operates ten health centers designated as Federally Qualified Health Centers throughout Mobile County, which offer outpatient primary healthcare services.

The Jefferson County Department of Health and the Mobile County Health Department are different from other county-level health departments throughout the state in that both receive federal funding. The two county health departments are classified as separate jurisdictions within the divisional framework of the Alabama Department of Public Health, and some employees of both agencies are classified as county employees. The case *Miller vs. Mobile County Board of Health* further solidified MCHD’s basis as a state agency using the logic of sovereign immunity, a legal doctrine only applicable to state and federal actors in the United States.

## Agency Function and Subfunctions

The functions of the MCHD are to promote, improve, and protect the health of Mobile County residents by providing health assessment information to the community; providing leadership in public health policy; ensuring access to quality health services and information; preventing disease; and enforcing health regulations. The department is one of the agencies responsible for performing the Client Services function of Alabama government.

In the performance of its mandated function, the agency may engage in the following subfunctions:

- **Planning and Supervising the Public Health of the County.** The MCHD supervises, subject to the advice of the Mobile County Board of Health, the sanitary interests of the county and enforces the health laws of the state, including all ordinances or rules and regulations (Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-3-2 [1]). This subfunction involves

all activities associated with the work of the Mobile County Board of Health and the agency's top management team in developing program goals and priorities, establishing policies and procedures, and measuring the quality of care provided to clients.

- **Protecting the Environmental Health of the Community.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-3-2 (4) mandates all county departments of health in Alabama to exercise general supervision over the sanitary conditions of various public and private institutions or facilities and to use legal means to abate unsanitary problems. The MCHD Bureau of Environmental Health and Preparedness enforces federal, state, and local laws or regulations designed to provide and protect sanitary living conditions and a safe food supply. This subfunction encompasses the following program areas: Food and Lodging Division, Onsite Sewage Division, and Vector Control Division. The core service activities performed for those programs include product tests, field visits, facility inspections, complaint investigations, plan evaluations and approvals, permits or notices issuance, and various surveys.

*Explanatory note: In the study of infectious disease, a “disease vector” is an agent that carries and transmits pathogens; for example, a mosquito can be said to be a “disease vector” for malaria. “Vector control” comprises any method to limit or eradicate mammals, insects, or other animals that transmit disease (World Health Organization, 2018).*

- **Responding to Natural and Manmade Disasters.** MCHD supports disaster recovery efforts in the event of manmade or natural disasters pursuant to Federal Emergency Support Function (ESF) #8. The agency works in conjunction with large-scale response teams including the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Alabama Emergency Management Agency, the Mobile County Emergency Management Agency, the local Red Cross, and local police, fire, and rescue officials. The scope of duties includes response to damage from hurricanes, tornadoes, and industrial accidents, as well as widespread infectious disease outbreaks like influenza. MCHD primarily provides assistance to first responders, but the preponderance of effort is directed toward mitigation and recovery after the event has occurred. In an age of increasing acts of international and domestic terrorism, the MCHD will play a lead role in response to potentially deliberate chemical, radiological, and especially biological releases, in addition to its more frequent and traditional support roles through mitigation and recovery.
- **Controlling the Outbreak and Spread of Communicable Diseases.** According to the Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-3-2 (3), one of the major duties of the department is to investigate cases or outbreaks of any communicable disease and to enforce measures for the prevention or extermination of the disease. This subfunction, carried out by the Bureau of Communicable Diseases and Support Services, involves investigating disease outbreaks; tracking diseases in the community that are reportable by law; providing testing and/or treatment for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), AIDS/HIV, and tuberculosis; and offering immunization services to children and travelers.

- **Providing Outpatient Health Care Services to the Public.** The Mobile County Health Department operates primary care clinics at various locations within Mobile County to provide outpatient health care services to eligible county residents. The focus of health care is the prevention of disease and the treatment of illness in its early stages so that hospitalization or special care may be avoided. Health care services available in the clinics operated by the Family Health Clinical Services Directorate include family planning, maternity care, pediatric primary care, adult health care, dental care, immunization, clinical laboratory testing, optometry, urgent care, behavioral health, nutrition counseling, social services, case management, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.
- **Recording and Providing Access to Vital Records.** The MCHD Vital Records Division is responsible for registering and preserving certain records of vital events that occur in Mobile County and for providing public access to these records. The MCHD vital records date back to the early 1800s, with birth records dating back to 1871 and death records dating back to 1820.

The MCHD was historically designated by the State Board of Health to keep duplicate copies of vital records and to issue official copies of these records to county residents; however, this function was superseded by the establishment of the Alabama Department of Public Health Center for Health Statistics. The Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-9A-2 clearly delineates the Center for Health Statistics (originally called the Office of Vital Statistics) as “the only system of health statistics throughout this state.”

The MCHD is no longer required to retain duplicate copies of birth records (to include birth certificates and amendments), except for records filed prior to the creation of the Center for Health Statistics in 1908. The same requirement also exists for death records after the Department of Public Health finalizes the death records. MCHD staff are still obligated to assist the public in obtaining certified copies of vital records housed by Center for Health Statistics and to provide access to all vital records filed prior to 1908.

- **Educating and Informing the Public.** In accordance with the Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-3-5 (14), (15), and (16), county health departments are obligated to educate the people of the county through lectures, newspaper articles, and demonstrations on the importance of protecting all food products, houses, and human beings against unsanitary conditions or disease. This subfunction involves educating the community about public health through social media, television/radio programs and newspaper articles; coordinating outreach and training activities; and promoting and conducting awareness programs, such as Public Health Week, the Tobacco Control and Prevention Program, and faith-based initiatives.

Staff members of the agency’s Community Prevention Programs work with service centers within the MCHD, churches, civic groups, and community organizations to address health issues; support health-related activities and programs; and provide health data and information. Community Prevention serve as liaisons between the community and the department to increase the awareness and understanding of department functions.

- **Administering Internal Operations.** A significant portion of the agency's work includes general administrative, financial, and personnel activities performed to support the programmatic areas of the agency, including:

**Managing the Agency:** Activities include internal office management activities common to most government agencies such as corresponding and communicating, scheduling, meeting, documenting policy and procedures, reporting, litigating, legislating (drafting, tracking), publicizing and providing information, managing records, and managing information systems and technology.

**Managing Finances:** Activities include budgeting (preparing and reviewing budget package, submitting the budget package to the Department of Finance, documenting amendments and performance of the budget); purchasing (requisitioning and purchasing supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products received); accounting for the expenditure, encumbrance, disbursement, and reconciliation of funds within the agency's budget through a uniform system of accounting and reporting; authorizing travel; contracting with companies or individuals; bidding for products and services; and assisting in the audit process.

**Managing Human Resources:** Activities include recruiting and hiring eligible individuals to fill positions within the agency; providing compensation to employees; providing benefits to employees such as leave, health insurance, unemployment compensation, worker's compensation, injury compensation, retirement, and death benefits; supervising employees by evaluating performance, granting leave, and monitoring the accumulation of leave; training and providing continuing education for employees; investigating and disciplining.

**Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources:** Activities include inventorying and accounting for non-consumable property and reporting property information to the appropriate authority; leasing and/or renting offices or facilities; providing security for property managed by the agency; insuring property; and assigning, inspecting and maintaining agency property.

# Records Appraisal of the Mobile County Health Department

The following is a discussion of the two major categories of records created and/or maintained by MCHD: Temporary Records and Permanent Records.

## Temporary Records

Temporary records should be held for what is considered to be their active life and disposed of once all fiscal, legal, and administrative requirements have been met. Some of the temporary records created by the department are discussed below:

- **Onsite Sewage Disposal System Application and Maintenance Files.** These files document applications for permits to construct or repair conventional residential/commercial septic tank systems and all follow up approval or related activities performed by the agency staff. They provide documentation that may be of legal value as long as the system is in use; as such, the records are retained until the system is no longer in use.
- **Radiation Exposure Reports.** The Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-14-8 requires each person who uses a source of ionizing radiation to maintain appropriate records showing radiation exposure. These reports are submitted by facilities (including medical x-ray offices, dental x-ray offices, veterinary x-ray offices, academic/other x-ray offices, non-medical x-ray offices, industrial radioactive material sites, medical radioactive material sites, academic/other radioactive material sites, particle accelerators, and general radioactive material sites) to document radiation doses received by their employees in the general course of business (Alabama Department of Public Health, 2017). In accordance with the retention requirements of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and due to the potential litigation arising from the exposure to radiation, these records are retained 50 years for reference.
- **X-Ray Machine Registration and Inspection Files.** These files document the agency staff members' efforts in regulating the use of x-ray machines. A typical file contains registration form, inspection reports, shielding evaluations, complaint records, and correspondence. The records are useful to the agency as long as the device is in use and are maintained 3 years after the termination of the machine registration.
- **X-Ray Machine Shielding Evaluation Files.** These files document the agency staff members' efforts in regulating the use of x-ray machines. Shielding evaluations are kept for a longer retention (20 years) than the rest of the registration and inspection files because they can be used, in the event that a new x-ray facility utilizes the same area, to compare with the new facility's design to see if existing shielding is adequate.
- **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome/Human Immunodeficiency Virus (AIDS/HIV) Positive Testing Records.** The agency offers confidential AIDS/HIV antibody testing in all of its primary centers/clinics. Pre- and post-test counseling are also offered, and referrals are made for clients who test HIV antibody positive. These positive

laboratory test results for AIDS/HIV should be retained for 75 years, the same record retention as medical records for TB and STD patients.

- **Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) Patient Case Files.** These records document the testing, diagnosis and treatment of cases of sexually transmitted diseases, which are considered by the State Board of Health to be “contagious, infectious, and dangerous to public health” (Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-11A-13). These confidential medical records should be preserved for 75 years, the average life span of individual patients, for clinical reference needs.
- **Tuberculosis Patient Case Files.** This series is composed of medical records pertaining to the diagnoses and treatment of active/suspected tuberculosis (TB) patients. A typical file may contain some or all of the following documents: TB clinical records, laboratory reports, X-ray readings, TB drug cards, Reports of Verified Case of Tuberculosis, TB Case - Current Information Exchange Forms, Interstate Reciprocal Notification of Disease forms, and hospital reports of TB patients. The case files are confidential (Code of Alabama 1975 § 22-11A-9) and should be kept for 75 years – long enough to cover the average life span of an individual patient – as a reference source for reactivated cases.
- **Health Center/Clinic Patient Medical Records.** The MCHD is responsible for providing a wide range of outpatient health care services to eligible county residents. These records serve as case files to document diagnoses, treatments, and other services (such as flu shots and immunizations) provided to eligible patients. The current retention is 22 years after the date of last patient visit; this verbiage complies with the legal age of majority in Alabama (19 years) plus the statute of limitations for birth injury lawsuits in the state.
- **Peer Review Files.** These files are developed by the department’s providers (health care physicians) based on the treatment process of patients, this series contains information used by various providers to share their experience and to improve performance. The retention for this series is 5 years.

## Permanent Records

The Archives Division recommends the following records as permanent.

### Planning and Supervising the Public Health of the County

- **Mobile County Board of Health Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Packets.** These records document proposed and executed proceedings of the Mobile County Board of Health. Meetings of the board are held once every month and may be called as needed. The meeting agendas, minutes, and packets serve collectively as the core documentation of the major functions of the MCHD with regard to policy and the decision-making processes. (**Bibliographic Title: Meeting Files**)

- **Mobile County Health Department (MCHD) Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures.** These are official bylaws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures, and protocols designed for the administration of the agency's programs and services. They may include procedural manuals, rules and regulations, instruction guides, handbooks, or other records that establish a course of action for the entire department or a specific service program. **(Bibliographic Title: Policies and Procedures; Rules and Regulations)**

## **Protecting the Environmental Health of the Community**

- **Vector Control Division Mosquito Program Files.** The MCHD Vector Control Division's scope includes mosquito control and rodent control. Each day the Division evaluates mosquito and disease surveillance data, inspection reports, rainfall data, and service requests to target 9-10 routes out of a total of 50 routes for nightly (Monday - Friday) spraying. When necessary, weekday morning, weekend, and holiday spraying is conducted. Program files are designated as permanent by the MCHD for their long-term reference value. **(Bibliographic Title: Not Applicable) (Maintained by the Mobile County Health Department)**
- **Vector Control Division Rodent Program Files.** The MCHD Vector Control Division's scope includes mosquito control and rodent control. Inspectors use rodenticides (rodent poison) outside of buildings and instruct residents on sanitation (cleaning) measures that they can take to discourage rodent activity. Rodent complains are received and processed via telephone and e-mail. Program files are designated as permanent by the MCHD for their long-term reference value. **(Bibliographic Title: Not Applicable) (Maintained by the Mobile County Health Department)**

## **Responding to Natural and Manmade Disasters**

- **Mobile County Health Department Safety Committee Meeting Minutes and Reports.** The department has an internal safety committee in place to conduct and review periodic hazard surveillance and risk assessments, evaluate the effectiveness of the agency in the performance of fire and other emergency preparedness drills, and respond to other safety related incidents. This series contains meeting minutes and annual reports of the committee. **(Bibliographic Title: Meeting Files)**
- **After Action Reports.** This series consists of records retroactively documenting events and disasters, including information on how many team members were activated, how long they were activated, what type of event or disaster the team monitored, the mobilization of shelters and location of shelters, and the team members who were staffing the shelters. **(Bibliographic Title: Action Response Reports)**

## **Providing Outpatient Health Care Services to the Public**

- **Narcotics Dispensation Records.** The Mobile County Health Department may dispense narcotics to patients at its health centers as a component of their care. The Code of

Federal Regulations Title 21 Part 1304 requires that any organization registered or authorized to dispense controlled substance must maintain the following information pertaining to the dispensation: the name of the substance; each finished form, and the number of units or volume of finished form in each commercial container; the number of commercial containers distributed to other persons, including the date of and number of containers in each reduction from inventory, and the name, address, and registration number of the person to whom the containers were distributed; and the number of units of finished forms and/or commercial containers distributed or disposed of in any other manner by the registrant (e.g., by distribution of complimentary samples or by destruction), including the date and manner of distribution or disposal, the name, address, and registration number of the person to whom distributed, and the quantity in finished form distributed or disposed. (21CFR1304). The records are to be retained permanently in accordance with the federal regulation. **(Bibliographic Title: Not Applicable)**  
**(Maintained by the Mobile County Health Department)**

## **Recording and Providing Access to Vital Records**

- **Birth/Death Records, Amendments, and Other Vital Records Filed Prior to 1908.** Due to the implementation of an electronic transmission system by the State Center for Health Statistics in 1996, the agency is no longer required to create and keep birth/death certificates and other vital records, with the exception of records filed prior to the creation of the State Center for Health Statistics in 1908. All vital records created and filed with the MCHD prior to 1908 should be preserved permanently, as in some cases they are the only extant copies. **(Bibliographic Title: Vital Records)**

## **Educating and Informing the Public**

- **Still Photographs, Audio/Video Recordings, Publications, and Scrapbooks.** To supplement and preserve a record of the department's history, services, and programs, MCHD staff members create and maintain a collection of photographs, audio/video recordings, various publications, and scrapbooks. These records serve as illustrations in various departmental publications and/or as visual displays of program activities. **(Bibliographic Title: [1] Audiovisual Files; [2] Publicity Files)**
- **Informational and Promotional Materials.** These records are created to build public awareness about a variety of issues and department-related activities. These records consist of copies of press releases, articles for newspapers/journals, typescripts of broadcast announcements, photographs, and other related material. **(Bibliographic Title: Publicity Files)**

## **Administering Internal Operations**

- **Administrative Files of the Mobile County Health Officer that Document Policy, Process, and Procedure.** These records document the activities of the Health Officer in directing the work of the department and in enforcing policy. This series may include correspondence, memoranda, speeches, and other related materials. They are part of the

core documentation of the department and should be preserved permanently.  
(**Bibliographic Title: Mobile County Health Officer Administrative Files**)

- **Administrative Rules and Regulations.** These rules and regulations are approved by the agency and govern the conduct of the agency. Combined with the policy and procedures manuals, they document the agency's roles in prescribing standards for its programs.  
(**Bibliographic Title: Rules and Regulations**)
- **Register of Administrative Rules.** Each agency shall have an officer [who] shall file in the office of the Secretary of State a certified copy of each rule adopted by it. The secretary of the agency shall keep a permanent register of the rules open to public inspection. (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-22-6) (**Bibliographic Title: Not Applicable**)  
(**Maintained by the Mobile County Health Department**)
- **Annual Reports.** These reports are created to highlight the achievements and public impact of the agency's services during the previous year. The reports are a combination of narrative summary and statistical data. Annual Reports created by the agency may include but are not limited to: Mobile County Health Department Annual Reports, HIV Program Annual Reports, and Emergency Response Annual Reports. (**Bibliographic Title: State Publications**)
- **Quarterly Employee Newsletters.** The quarterly employee newsletters consist of information to keep agency staff informed about any events that are happening in the MCHD. It also features the employee of the month, profiles of all newly hired employees, and announcements of community events in which the MCHD is involved.  
(**Bibliographic Title: State Publications**)
- **Website and Social Media Site(s).** The agency maintains websites at [www.mchd.org](http://www.mchd.org) and [www.familyhealthalabama.org](http://www.familyhealthalabama.org). Information on the websites includes the agency's history, members of the Board of Health, financial data, organizational charts, reports, inspection scores for restaurants/hotels, health-related statistics, and searchable guides to MCHD services. ADAH staff captures and preserves the agency's website and other social media sites via a service offered by the Internet Archive [Archive-It]. Any content behind password protected or login would not be captured by ADAH. Check with the ADAH website at [www.archiveit.org/organizations/62](http://www.archiveit.org/organizations/62) to ensure your agency and social media site(s) are captured and preserved. If your agency's website and social media site(s) are not being captured by the service, please contact the Archives Division at 334-242-4452 to get them included. (**Bibliographic Title: Website and Social Media Site[s]**)
- **Final Grant Narrative Reports.** Various programs within the MCHD apply for and receive grants from federal and state agencies. This record series is composed of final narrative reports documenting the attainment of project goals and objectives as originally detailed in grant applications. (**Bibliographic Title: Grant Project Narrative Reports**)

- **Building Plans, Blueprints, and Specifications.** The department's headquarters are located in the Major General William C. Gorgas Clinic, a historic building originally constructed in 1838 as the U.S. Marine Hospital, where injured Confederate and Union soldiers were later treated during the Civil War. The hospital ceased operation in 1952. The Mobile County Board of Health acquired the property from the Tuberculosis Association in 1975 and restored the building. These building plans, blueprints, and specifications document the original structure and changes (e.g., additions to the rear of the building) to this historic building. (**Bibliographic Title: Building Plans and Specifications**)

# **Permanent Records List**

## **Mobile County Health Department**

### **Planning and Supervising the Public Health of the County**

1. Mobile County Board of Health Meeting Agendas, Minutes, and Packets
2. Mobile County Health Department (MCHD) Rules, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures

### **Protecting the Environmental Health of the Community**

1. Vector Control Division Mosquito Program Files\*
2. Vector Control Division Rodent Program Files\*

### **Responding to Natural and Manmade Disasters**

1. Mobile County Health Department Safety Committee Meeting Minutes and Reports
2. After Action Reports

### **Providing Outpatient Health Care Services to the Public**

1. Narcotics Dispensation Records\*

### **Recording and Providing Access to Vital Records**

1. Birth/Death Records, Amendments, and Other Vital Records Filed Prior to 1908

### **Educating and Informing the Public**

1. Still Photographs, Audio/Video Recordings, Publications, and Scrapbooks
2. Informational and Promotional Materials

### **Administering Internal Operations**

1. Administrative Files of the Mobile County Health Officer that Document Policy, Process, and Procedure
2. Administrative Rules and Regulations
3. Register of Administrative Rules\*
4. Annual Reports
5. Quarterly Employee Newsletters
6. Website and Social Media Site(s)
7. Final Grant Narrative Reports
8. Building Plans, Blueprints, and Specifications

\*indicates records that the Mobile County Health Department determined should be retained permanently and that ADAH anticipates will remain in the care and custody of the creating agency.

ADAH staff is available to work with agency staff in determining the best location and storage conditions for the long-term care and maintenance of permanent records.

# **Mobile County Health Department General Records Disposition Authority**

This Records Disposition Authority (RDA) is issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-13-5 and 41-13-20 through 21. It was compiled by the Archives Division, Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH), which serves as the Commission's staff, in cooperation with representatives of the Agency. The RDA lists records created and maintained by the Agency in carrying out their mandated functions and activities. It establishes minimum retention periods and disposition instructions for those records and provides the legal authority for the Agency to implement records destruction.

Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. These records must be protected from "mutilation, loss, or destruction," so that they may be transferred to an official's successor in office and may be made available to members of the public. Records also must be kept in accordance with auditing standards approved by the Examiners of Public Accounts (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-12-2, 36-12-4, and 41-5-23). For assistance in implementing this RDA, or for advice on records disposition or other records management concerns, contact the agency records manager or ADAH Archives Division at (334) 242-4452.

## **Explanation of Records Requirements**

The RDA shall govern the disposition of all records, regardless of format, created by the agency from creation to dissolution. Please contact the staff of the Department of Archives and History before destroying any records created prior to 1940.

This RDA supersedes any previous records disposition schedules or RDAs governing the retention of the records created by the Agency. Copies of superseded schedules are no longer valid and may not be used for records disposition.

The RDA establishes retention and disposition instructions for records listed below, regardless of the medium on which those records may be kept. Electronic mail, for example, is a communications tool that may record permanent or temporary information. As for records in any other format, the retention periods for e-mail records are governed by the requirements of the subfunctions to which the records belong.

Certain other record-like materials are not actually regarded as official records and may be disposed of under this RDA. Such materials include (1) duplicate record copies that do not require official action, so long as the creating office maintains the original record for the period required; (2) catalogs, trade journals, and other publications received that require no action and do not document agency activities; (3) stocks of blank stationery, blank forms, or other surplus materials that are not subject to audit and have become obsolete; (4) transitory records, which are temporary records created for short-term, internal purposes, may include, but are not limited to, telephone call-back messages, drafts of ordinary documents not needed for their evidential value, copies of material sent for information purposes but not needed by the receiving office for future

business, and internal communications about social activities; (5) honorary materials, plaques, awards, presentations, certificates, and gifts received or maintained by the agency staff. They may be disposed of without documentation of destruction.

## **Records Disposition Requirements**

This section of the RDA is arranged by subfunctions of the Agency and lists the groups of records created and/or maintained as a result of activities and transactions performed in carrying out these subfunctions. The Agency may submit requests to revise specific records disposition requirements to the State Records Commission for consideration at its regular biannual meetings.

### **Planning and Supervising the Public Health of the County**

#### **MOBILE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING AGENDAS, MINUTES, AND PACKETS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT (MCHD) RULES, REGULATIONS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

### **Protecting the Environmental Health of the Community**

#### **Applications for Permits**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

*Note: Applications for permits may be accepted from the following types of institutions: bakeries, bars/lounges, camps, caterers, charitable kitchens, commissaries, day care center kitchens and sanitation, delis, detention facilities, grocery stores/meat markets, Head Start programs, hotels, institutions, jails, limited food services, limited retail, Meals on Wheels, mobile units, pools, private schools, processing plants, public schools, restaurants, seafood shops, spas, specialty shops, summer lunch preparation sites.*

#### **Applications for Tattoo Artist Permits**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

#### **Body Art Facilities and Operators Applications**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

#### **Onsite Sewage Disposal System Applications and Maintenance Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the system is no longer in use.

#### **Alternative Onsite Sewage Disposal System Application Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the system is no longer in use.

**Notices of Intent to Suspend/Revoke Permits**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Surveys of Private Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**Site Evaluations for Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems (Perk Tests)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Certificates for Installers of Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Bacteriological Tests for Drinking Water**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**Complaint Records – Food Service**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the settlement of the complaint.

*Note: Complaint records may be produced pertaining to the following types of institutions: bakeries, bars/lounges, camps, caterers, charitable kitchens, commissaries, day care center kitchens and sanitation, delis, detention facilities, grocery stores/meat markets, Head Start programs, hotels, institutions, jails, limited food services, limited retail, Meals on Wheels, mobile units, private schools, processing plants, public schools, restaurants, seafood shops, specialty shops, summer lunch preparation sites. Complaint records may also be produced pertaining to cases of miscellaneous foodborne illness.*

**Complaint Records – Non-Food Service**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the settlement of the complaint.

*Note: Complaint records may be produced pertaining to the following types of institutions: body art facilities, public buildings (cases regarding mold and mildew), pools, and spas. Complaint records may also be produced pertaining to general sanitation complaints.*

**Food Handler Training Certificates**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

**Inspection Records – Food Service**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

*Note: Inspection records may be produced pertaining to the following types of institutions: bakeries, bars/lounges, bulk milk haulers, bulk milk pickup tankers, camp kitchens, camp sanitation, caterers, charitable kitchens, commissaries, dairy farms, dairy plants, day care center kitchens, day care center sanitation, delis, detention facility kitchens, detention facility sanitation, grocery stores/meat markets, Head Start program kitchens, Head Start sanitation, hotel sanitation, institution kitchens, institution sanitation, jail kitchens, jail sanitation, limited food services, limited retail, Meals on Wheels, milk processing plants, mobile units, private*

*school kitchens, processing plants, public school sanitation, restaurants, seafood shops, specialty shops, summer lunch distribution sites, summer lunch preparation sites, temporary foods.*

**Inspection Records – Non-Food Service**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

*Note: Inspection records may be produced pertaining to the following types of institutions – body art facilities, mold and mildew in public buildings, pools, spas. Investigation records may also be produced pertaining to cases of general sanitation complaints.*

**Demolition/Renovation Project for Facilities with Asbestos-Containing Materials Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Lead-In-Paint Survey Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Odor Complaint Forms**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Public Hearing Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Public Swimming Pool Construction Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain: Retain until the pool is no longer in use.

**Public Swimming Pool Operation and Inspection Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Rabies Exposure Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Official Notices of Violations of Rabies Vaccination Law**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Rabies Violation Citations**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Emergency Orders of the Health Officer**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Radiation Exposure Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 50 years from date report is filed.

**Radioactive Materials Licenses (Agency Copies)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Radioactive Materials Use Logs**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 50 years after last entry.

**Subdivision Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**Tanning Device Facility Inspection Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the completion of one audit and the release of the audit report.

**Tanning Device Facility and Inspection Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the termination of the permit.

**VECTOR CONTROL DIVISION MOSQUITO PROGRAM FILES**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Retain in office.

**VECTOR CONTROL DIVISION RODENT PROGRAM FILES**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Retain in office.

**Sanitary Surveys**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**X-Ray Machine Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**X-Ray Machine Registration and Inspection Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the termination of the registration.

**X-Ray Machine Shielding Evaluation Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 20 years after the termination of the registration.

**Responding to Natural and Manmade Disasters**

**MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES AND REPORTS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**Disaster Response Logs**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**AFTER ACTION REPORTS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

## **Controlling the Outbreak and Spread of Communicable Diseases**

### **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome/Human Immunodeficiency Virus (AIDS/HIV) Positive Testing Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 75 years.

### **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome/Human Immunodeficiency Virus (AIDS/HIV) Negative Test Results**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

### **Certificates of Religious Exemption from Immunization**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

### **Certificates of Selective Exemption from Immunizations**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.

### **Communicable Disease Investigation and Notification Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

### **Copies of Disease Case Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

### **State Audit Immunization Survey Records (Schools, Day Care Centers, and Two-Year-Old Children)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years or until the completion of next survey.

### **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) Patient Case Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 75 years.

### **Tuberculosis Patient Case Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record Retain 75 years.

## **Providing Outpatient Health Care Services to the Public**

### **Health Center/Clinic Appointment Logs, Sign-in Sheets, and Telephone Logs**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

### **Health Center/Clinic Patient Encounter Forms**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

### **Health Center/Clinic Patient Medical Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 22 years after the date of last patient visit.

**Dental Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 22 years after the date of last patient visit.

**Laboratory Back Up Test Results**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Laboratory Equipment Maintenance Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for the life of the instrument.

**Laboratory Results**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 22 years after the date of last patient visit.

**Laboratory Testing Quality Assurance and Staff Competency Evaluation Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**NARCOTICS DISPENSATION RECORDS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Retain in office (21 CFR 1304).

**Narcotics Permits**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the expiration of the permit.

**Pharmacy Records (Inventory, Order Forms, Prescriptions)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 2 years.

**Vaccine Administrative Slips (Signed by the Nurse Giving the Immunization)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 75 years.

**Vaccine Inventory and Temperature Graphs Monthly Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**Vaccine Statements (Signed by the Patient or the Legal Guardian of the Patient)**

- a. Vaccine Statements for Influenza  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 10 years.
- b. All Other Vaccine Statements  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 75 years.

**Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program Requisition Files, Quality Assurance Audits, Travel Vouchers)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years.

**Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program Administrative Files**

Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

*Note: Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program Administrative Files may consist of the following record subtypes: Alabama Food Instrument issuance and void reports, analysis reports, breast pump loan release forms, civil rights training documentation, complaint forms, correspondence, eligibility certification files, enrollment participation reports, financial records, Food Instrument registers, formula logs, health promotions, inventory logs, Nutrition Education Plans, quality assurance reviews, quarterly and annual WIC program participation, training reports, vendor files, waiting lists, miscellaneous program management reports.*

## **Recording and Providing Access to Vital Records**

### **BIRTH/DEATH RECORDS, AMENDMENTS, AND OTHER VITAL RECORDS FILED PRIOR TO 1908.**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **Applications for Vital Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

#### **Notices of Disinterment/Disinterment Permits**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years from issue.

## **Educating and Informing the Public**

### **STILL PHOTOGRAPHS, AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS, PUBLICATIONS, AND SCRAPBOOKS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

### **INFORMATIONAL AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

#### **Photograph publication permission forms**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 year after photograph is published.

## **Administering Internal Operations: Managing the Agency**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE FILES OF THE MOBILE COUNTY HEALTH OFFICER THAT DOCUMENT POLICY, PROCESS, AND PROCEDURE**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND REGULATIONS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

### **REGISTER OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD. Retain in Office (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-22-6).

**Administrative Rule Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**Internal Committee and Staff Meeting Agenda and Minutes**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year.

**Routine Correspondence**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**Mailing Lists**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for useful life.

**Acknowledgment from the Secretary of State Relating to Notices of Meetings Posted by State Agencies**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years.

**ANNUAL REPORTS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTERS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**Periodic Reports (Not to Include Annual Reports)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until the release of the annual reports.

**Records documenting the implementation of the agency's approved RDA (copies of transmittal forms to Archives or State Records Center, evidence of obsolete records destroyed, and annual reports to State Records Commission)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after audit after the end of the fiscal year in which the RDA was superseded.

**Copies of Approved RDA**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after the audit for the fiscal year in which the RDA is superseded.

**Computer Systems Documentation (Hardware/Software Specifications and Warranties)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain documentation of former system 1 year after audit for the fiscal year in which the former hardware and software no longer exists anywhere in the agency and all permanent records have been migrated to a new system.

**WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA SITE(S)**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

*Note: ADAH staff capture and preserve the agency's website and other social media sites via a service offered by the Internet Archive [Archive-It]. Any content behind password protected or login would not be captured by ADAH. Check with the ADAH website at [www.archiveit.org/organizations/62](http://www.archiveit.org/organizations/62) to ensure your agency and social media site(s) are captured*

*and preserved. If your agency's website and social media site(s) are not captured by the service, please contact the Archives Division at 334-242-4452 to get them included.*

**Peer Review Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Legal Case Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the case is closed.

**Investigation Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the case is closed.

**Subpoenas**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the case is closed.

**Records documenting Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) complaints and lawsuits**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after settlement.

**Legal Opinions of General Counsel**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until superseded.

**HIPAA and Compliance Investigative Files and Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the fiscal year in which the records are created.

**HIPAA and Compliance Depositions**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the fiscal year in which the records are created.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing Finances**

**Records documenting the preparation of a budget request package and reporting of the status of funds, requesting amendments of allotments, and reporting program performance**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Records documenting the requisitioning and purchasing of supplies and equipment, receipting and invoicing for goods, and authorizing payment for products (includes AST-1 and AST-1A)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Records of original entry or routine accounting transactions, such as journals, registers, and ledgers, and records of funds deposited outside the state treasury**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Records documenting requests for authorization from supervisors to travel on official business and other related materials, such as travel reimbursement forms and itineraries**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Records documenting contracts for services or personal property**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after expiration of the contract.

**Records documenting the bid process (including requests for proposals and unsuccessful responses)**

- a. Sealed Bids over \$15,000

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the bids were opened. (Code of Alabama 1975 § 41-16-24).

- b. Other Bids

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain for 10 years after the award of the contract, then destroy.

**Informal Quotes – documents soliciting quotations for purchases that do not require competitive bidding**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Audit Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Grant Project Files**

- a. Healthcare Program Grant Project Financial Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years following the date service was provided.

- b. Federally-funded Grant Project Financial Files

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years following the date of submission of the final expenditure report.

- c. State-funded Grant Project Financial Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years following the end of the fiscal year in which the last transaction occurred.
- d. Grant Project-related Property Inventory Files  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the final disposition of property.
- e. FINAL GRANT NARRATIVE REPORTS  
Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**Medicare Cost Report Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created or until the final settlement of the cost report.

**Financial Management Reports**

- a. If Final End-Of-Year Reports Are Generated  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain the final report 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.
- b. If No Final End-Of-Year Reports Are Generated  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain all reports 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.
- c. State-Funded  
Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years following the end of the fiscal year in which the last transaction occurred.

**Billing Records of the Department’s Central Billing Office (Explanation of Payments and Response Files)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Health Center/Clinic Payment Deposit Listings**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing Human Resources**

**Personnel File - Records documenting an employee’s work history - generally maintained as a case file**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

**Records documenting payroll (e.g. pre-payroll reports, payroll check registers)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm.

**Records documenting payroll deductions for tax purposes (including Form 941)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Records documenting employee hours worked, leave earned, and leave taken**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Records Documenting Leave Donations**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Employee Flexible Benefits Plan Files (Applications and Correspondence)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after termination of participation in program.

**Unemployment Compensation Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the transaction occurred and settlement of any claims due.

**Employee Drug Screening Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Employee Incident Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 5 years.

**Employee Supplemental Retirement Plan Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 6 years after separation of the employee from the agency.

**Administering Internal Operations: Managing Properties, Facilities, and Resources**

**BUILDING PLANS, BLUEPRINTS, AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Disposition: PERMANENT RECORD.

**Semiannual Inventory Lists**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later. (Code of Alabama 1975 § 36-16-8[1])

**Agency Copies of Transfer of State Property Forms (SD-1)**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Property Inventory Cards and/or Computer Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the items were removed from inventory.

**Receipts of Responsibility for Property**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain until return of item to property manager.

**Facilities/Building Security Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 1 year after compliance or financial audit by the Examiners of Public Accounts or an equivalent auditing firm or one year after the end of the fiscal year the audit covers, whichever is later.

**Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance Files**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 3 years after the end of the fiscal year in which the property is sold or replaced.

**Fire and Safety Equipment Inspection Records**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years.

**Safety Committee Annual Reports**

Disposition: Temporary Record. Retain 7 years.

# **Requirement and Recommendations for Implementing the Records Disposition Authority (RDA)**

## **Requirement**

Under the Code of Alabama 1975, § 41-13-21, “no state officer or agency head shall cause any state record to be destroyed or otherwise disposed of without first obtaining approval of the State Records Commission.” This Records Disposition Authority constitutes authorization by the State Records Commission for the disposition of the records of the Agency as stipulated in this document.

One condition of this authorization is that the Agency submit an annual Records Disposition Authority (RDA) Implementation Report on its activities, including documentation of records destruction, to the State Records Commission.

## **Recommendations**

In addition, the Agency should make every effort to establish and maintain a quality record-keeping program by conducting the following activities:

The Agency should designate a staff member in a managerial position as its records liaison/records manager, who is responsible for: ensuring the development of quality record keeping systems that meet the business and legal needs of the agency, coordinating the transfer and destruction of records, ensuring that permanent records held on alternative storage media (such as microforms and digital imaging systems) are maintained in compliance with national and state standards, and ensuring the regular implementation of the agency’s approved RDA.

Permanent records in the Agency’s custody should be maintained under proper intellectual control and in an environment that will ensure their physical order and preservation.

Destruction of temporary records, as authorized in this RDA, should occur agency-wide on a regular basis—for example, after the successful completion of an audit, at the end of an administration, or at the end of a fiscal year. Despite the RDA’s provisions, no record should be destroyed that is necessary to comply with requirements of the Open Meetings Act, audit requirements, or any legal notice or subpoena.

The agency should maintain full documentation of any computerized record-keeping system it employs. It should develop procedures for: (1) backing up all permanent records held in electronic format; (2) storing a back-up copy off-site; and (3) migrating all permanent records when the system is upgraded or replaced. If the agency chooses to maintain permanent records solely in electronic format, it is committed to funding any system upgrades and migration strategies necessary to ensure the records’ permanent preservation and accessibility.

Electronic mail contains permanent, temporary, or transitory record information. Although e-mail records can be printed out, filed, and retained according to the RDA’s requirements, the

office should preferably employ an electronic records management system capable of sorting e-mail into folders and archiving messages having long-term value.

The staff of the State Records Commission or the Examiners of Public Accounts may examine the condition of the permanent records maintained in the custody of the Agency and inspect records destruction documentation. Agency records managers and/or the ADAH archivists are available to instruct the staff in RDA implementation and otherwise assist the Agency in implementing its records management program.

The State Records Commission adopted this records disposition authority on October 24, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steve Murray, Chairman  
State Records Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

By signing below, the agency acknowledges receipt of the retention periods and requirements established by the records disposition authority.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bernard H. Eichold II, Health Officer  
Mobile County Health Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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