



Office of the Chief  
Records Officer for the  
U.S. Government

***Sent Via Email. No Hard Copy to Follow.***

July 21, 2025

Carl Pullian  
Acting Director, Enterprise Records Service  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave, NW  
Enterprise Records Service (005R1B)  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Mr. Pullian,

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) acknowledges receipt of the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) report regarding the alleged unauthorized disposition of Research Investigator Files at the Northport VA Medical Center (NVAMC), Northport, NY.

According to the report, the files alleged to have been lost were paper copies of signed consent forms, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) authorizations forms, safety screening questionnaires, and research notes relating to a study of chronic lower back pain (LBP). The files were stored in a locked desk drawer in a Research Principal Investigators' (PI) office. The PI alleged that staff from the Department of Research and Development Service (R&D) accessed the drawers and disposed of the files.

R&D Service staff acknowledged having communications with a departing PI about the records, but denied having access to the files and disposing of the records. A number of investigative inquiries and interviews were conducted by various disciplines such as privacy, records management, hospital police, and an administrative team and no evidence was found to suggest that any records were lost or privileged information breached.

NARA acknowledges that in an effort to prevent future incidents of this kind, the NVAMC Facility Records Officer made several recommendations to R&D Services including: a need for a signed memo to document transfer of records between PIs, improved procedures for tracking the custody of keys, a shared inventory and quarterly reviews, continued emphasis on the standard operating procedures for approved records destructions, and a need to immediately report all incidents to the Hospital Police for investigation.

In subsequent correspondence, VA assures NARA that records required to document VA Research Studies are appropriately retained by the Research Department as part of the Research Investigation Files.

Based on this information, the reporting requirements of 36 CFR 1230.14(a) have been met and NARA considers this matter closed. I appreciate your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please contact the Records Management Oversight and Reporting Program by email at [UnauthorizedDisposition@nara.gov](mailto:UnauthorizedDisposition@nara.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Fischer". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "William" and last name "Fischer" clearly distinguishable.

WILLIAM FISCHER  
Chief Records Officer  
for the U.S. Government (Acting)