

**HENNEPIN MEDICAL HISTORY CENTER  
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY March 2012**

**OGANIZATIONAL STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The Hennepin Medical History Center (HMHC) celebrates the history of medicine, medical education, service, and patient care in Minneapolis and Hennepin County. Specifically, we preserve the legacies of the Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) and the Metropolitan Medical Center (MMC) and their parent hospitals to make them available to the general public.

**PURPOSE OF THE COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY (CMP)**

In conjunction with other collections policies, the purpose of the CMP is to guide the HMHC Staff and Volunteer base in providing for the responsible preservation of, and public access to, Collections, while encouraging excellence in research, documentation and interpretation of the same. It will specifically outline the History Centers approach to fulfilling the best and common practices in the field of Museum and Collections Management.

**1) THE COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE**

The Collections Committee meets regularly (preferably on a monthly or bi-monthly basis) to process objects and materials in relation to the HMHC Permanent Collections. The five main functions of the Collections Committee are:

***a) General Responsibilities***

- i) To approve or disapprove recent donations recommended for accession by the Curators.
- ii) To approve/disapprove objects recommended for de-accession from HMHC Permanent Collections, by the Curators.
- iii) To provide comment on donation or collections management issues at the discretion of appropriate HMHC Staff, at the committee level in the generation of collections policies or procedure.
- iv) To annually review said policies and procedures.
- v) In conjunction with, and in lieu of, the Curators or Museum Manager, provide the Historical Council recommendations and direction concerning collection management and related preservation issues.

As a requirement, the Collections Committee shall contain “voting” representatives from the HMHC Historic Council, History Center Volunteers and/or the general public. At this time, approval or disapproval of motions and actions will be recognized by a simple majority of those committee members in attendance.

HMHC Staff will serve on the Collections Committee in an advisory capacity, to make professional recommendations and to guide discussion. On a case by case basis, the Committee will invite external advisors to attend meetings when necessary.

***b) Individual Responsibilities***

- i) The Curators– supervise and approve all Staff recommendations; they will present all objects and materials to the Committee, generate the Staff Acquisitions Report to the Committee, and the follow on Committee Report to the Historic Council. They will ensure proper procedure during the meeting.
- ii) The Museum Manager- provide administrative guidance.
- iii) Volunteers- review and discuss items individually; vote for or against inclusion of items into Permanent Collections, or their removal thereof as a de-accession- recommend the former to Board of Directors and be prepared to discuss items at Board Meetings when necessary.

Approval/disapproval will be on a case-by-case basis. Recommendations from the Collections Committee will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for final approval, via an updated Acquisitions Report.

**2) COLLECTIONS**

***a) Permanent Collections***

The Permanent Collection consists of items with significant intrinsic historic value to the HMHC, due to their provenance, technological and aesthetic merit, individual history, and manufacture as they relate to the Mission and CMP. Items from the Permanent Collection comprise the following sub collections: 3D (generally objects), 2D (generally archival materials).

Donations given to the History Center must include a signed Deed of Gift (which also includes a Temporary Custody Receipt) signed by the donor relinquishing all claims to the object. All tax matters dealing with donations will be handled by the donor. The Curators are primarily responsible for determining when to accept Temporary Custody of an object(s)/materials into the possession of the HMHC, based upon due diligence of Collections Research and the relevance of the item(s) to the Mission and CMP, and specifically the scope of the three and two dimensional (Archives and Photographs) Permanent Collections of the HMHC.

All items in this category will be cared for by the highest standard of Museum Collections Management (Care, Preservation, Access, Documentation and Storage), and therefore restrictions of handling and use are in effect.

***b) Non-Permanent Collection***

The Non Permanent Collection consists of items that are considered consumables and may be used for research and programs without special regard for their care. Items accepted into the HMHC Non-Permanent Collection may arguably contain historic value in their own right, but they do not meet the collecting goals of the organization and may fall outside the parameters of the CMP and Mission. Items from the Non-Permanent Collection comprise the following sub collections: Education, Exhibit Props, Reference Library, and Curator's Library.

At this time, the Curators and the Museum Manager have the ability to accept items into the HMHC Non- Permanent Collection at their discretion, independent of Committee or Board level process. However, the acquisition of these items will necessitate a Temporary Custody Receipt and Deed of Gift to transfer ownership, and an Acquisitions Report to the Collections Committee and Board of Directors will be provided. Current departmental registration methods will be used to process these items, under the responsibility of the Curators, but they will not be accessioned into the Permanent Collection. All Non-Permanent Collection items must be clearly marked and under most circumstances separated from the Permanent Collection when stored.

All items in this category are considered “durables” to be handled, used, and consumed for educational programs, events, display and research without restriction.

### 3) *DONATIONS*

#### *a) Acquisition*

At this time, in-person donations by appointment are required: “walk-in” or “drop off” donations (those encounters without an appointment) will not be accepted by Museum Staff. Initial interviews, photos, and other pertinent documentation will be initiated during the initial appointment. Subsequently, if there will be a forthcoming positive recommendation to the Collections Committee by Staff, a second meeting will be scheduled for the Deed of Gift to be signed, the physical transfer is made into the possession of the museum, and final disposition options decided upon by the donor. Exceptions to this rule are made at the discretion and judgment of the Curators and the Museum Manager, only when their knowledge of the Collection and the history of the object(s)/material(s) allow them to make an on-the-spot determination that they would recommend the above to the Collections Committee for approval into HMHC Collections.

In the case of a very large or special donation, where the preservation and storage of the items will position the HMHC to incur significant monetary, time and resource costs involved in its care, it is appropriate for the institution to negotiate a gift from the donor to alleviate this circumstance. Proceeds from a donation of this nature,

unless otherwise planned for by the Development Director and the Curator, will be earmarked for the *Collections Preservation Fund*.

For very large donations, it will also be common policy to negotiate with the donor, the cooperative processing of materials off-site before a transfer of ownership: this will facilitate the building of relationships to promote a culture of philanthropy, increase the documentation of family and personal histories surrounding the items, and significantly decrease the conditions in which a registration backlog and associated issues arise in the management of museum collections.

#### ***b) Registration***

A Temporary Custody Form and Deed of Gift are used to transfer ownership of any object or material into the possession of the HMHC. Formal accessioning of the above into the Permanent Collections will be undertaken after final approval by the Historic Council. This will be followed by the cataloguing of the item(s) into electronic and hardcopy data sets, and the placement of the items into permanent storage. All specific aspects of registration procedures will be outlined in the HMHC Registration Methods Manual, to be annually reviewed by the Staff and the Collections Committee, and modified as needed by that group with final approval by the Historic Council.

#### ***c) Public Access***

Donations made by the general public and others, for the benefit of the general public is a central theme upon which the modern basis for museum management is built. Providing public access to HMHC collections via exhibitions, the archives of the HMHC, and interpretive programs is an imperative in the daily and annual responsibilities of all Staff.

#### ***d) Building a Culture of Philanthropy and Common Good***

All donations to the HMHC will be conducted in a professional and courteous manner, consistent with the institution's Donor Bill of Rights. As stewards of the public trust, it is the responsibility of the HMHC to seek and maintain healthy relationships with its constituencies and community partners towards the greater good.

### **4) PURCHASES**

Purchases on behalf of the HMHC- for its Permanent Collection, must be initiated and approved by both of the Curators and the Museum Manager. Monies used for the

above will be through the *Collections Acquisitions Fund*. All items must be processed through the Collections Committee and notice given to the Historic Council. For items in excess of \$1000, approval by the Historic Council must be received.

## 5) INSURANCE

The Museum does not maintain insurance on the replacement value of its collection. Because many of the items are unique cultural and historical artifacts, it would be impossible to replace them. The Museum balances security, storage and fire protection as well as actual insurance coverage in providing protection for its collections.

## 6) APPRAISAL

It is a conflict of interest for the Museum to appraise donations for tax purposes, nor may Museum staff appraise items as a service for visitors. For the protection of the donor, it is recommended that appraisals be made by a disinterested third party before the object is conveyed to the Museum.

## 7) DISCREET COLLECTIONS OF THE HMHC

- a) **The MMC Historical Collection**, established in 1974, is dedicated to providing resources for research and education, as well as preserving and collecting photographs, records, and equipment that document the work of the MMC and its predecessors: St Barnabas Hospital (Minneapolis' first hospital 1871), including St Andrew's Hospital and The Swedish Hospital (1898-1970).
- b) **The HCMC History Collection** is a lively look at the life and work at a busy public hospital as well as patient care and medical procedures. The collection preserves and represents the history of HCMC and its predecessor hospitals dating from 1887: Minneapolis City Hospital, Minneapolis General Hospital, and Hennepin County General Hospital.

## 8) SCOPE OF COLLECTING

The HMHC will strive to collect those objects and materials that illuminate the ordinary and extraordinary stories of our past and present. As tangible histories in their own right, any object or materials collected will have intrinsic research value that can stand alone, such as their individual technological or aesthetic merit. However, HMHC also places great importance on the human-personal histories of artifacts- the biographical, anecdotal, and popular relevance they have towards society, community and identity.

A strong aspect and the focus of museum collecting efforts will be tied to local geography, i.e. Minneapolis and Hennepin County, but will also follow the storylines of the present and past organizations we represent that may step away from local places towards a national or international landscape.

***a) Discriminate Collecting***

As the HMHC matures as a professional organization based upon collecting, it will identify those genres, stories, populations, and time periods that are under-represented in the Collections and produce a more focused, active scope of collecting effort in the CMP. The key to the above endeavors will be a museum wide inventory project. Thereafter, a Collections Summary will be published followed by a Collecting Actions Plan.

It is recognized that a more focused collecting effort will better serve the public trust by allotting time, money and resources towards those items that truly fit the HMHC Mission and CMP. It will also help alleviate pressure towards the need to de-accession items in the future.

***b) Limited Collections Moratorium***

The Hennepin Medical History Center has adopted a Limited Collections Moratorium until further notice. Objects deemed essential to the mission of the organization, or whose historic value is so great that a formal consideration of their inclusion in the Collections of the HMHC is imperative, will be acquired on behalf of the organization at the discretion of the Curators and the Museum Manager. These objects and materials will be formally vetted through the Collections Committee and the Historic Council who have ultimate decision making authority for accessions into the Permanent Collection of the HMHC. The Limited Moratorium will give the institution the ability to make necessary changes to its registration procedures, including its electronic database, as well as effectively begin its 3 year Strategic Plan.

The goals and more specific reasons for the Limited Moratorium are outlined in the document *Scope of Limited Collecting Moratorium* and should be consulted in matters relating to this policy.

In order to demonstrate the practical application of the policy and to provide for adequate transparency of the process, the Curators will include in the Collections Department Acquisitions Report items offered for donation but not brought to the Collections Committee, based upon their judgment.

***c) Conflict of Interest***

Special care should be taken by all HMHC Employees, Volunteers and Historic Council Members to not personally collect items in competition with the organization.

Special care should be taken by Collections and Administrative Staff and to see that HMHC Permanent Collections are not habitually mixed with any other outside organizational collections [those not belonging to the HMHC by Deed of Gift]. The storage of other organizational collections on museum property is generally not preferred and in cases where this is the circumstance, it will be HMHC policy to require a Memorandum of Agreement outlining the responsibilities of both parties to the collection in question, to include a comprehensive inventory that details each object contained within it. Other organizational collections not documented in this fashion will constitute a conflict of interest to the HMHC CMP and Mission.

## 9) RESTRICTIONS ON DONATIONS

The HMHC will not accept certain objects into its Permanent Collections because of its Mission and generally accepted Museum Collections Management Policies. These items will include:

- a) Organic criteria:
  - Natural history specimens, to include any material relating to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.
  - Infested objects (mold, insects, etc.).
  - No textiles with fur or feathers.
  - Objects containing hazardous materials (fertilizers, radioactive material, etc.)
  - Defective or potentially harmful objects (to include non-deactivated ammunition and large machinery)
- b) Historical criteria:
  - Objects/archival materials lacking adequate provenance and/or anecdotal evidence.
  - Incomplete, missing, or damaged sets of objects and/or archival materials unless there is an overriding historical, cultural, or aesthetic reason. (If exceptionally rare or archival, then consideration may apply.)<sup>1</sup>
- c) Legal criteria:
  - American Indian objects not properly vetted per federal requirements of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).
  - No human remains (bones, skeletons, etc.).
  - Looted or stolen cultural or fine art objects to include the transport of cultural material covered under the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations Convention of 1979 relating to materials originating in European countries during WWII.
  - No fake, forged, or counterfeit objects and/or archival materials.

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d) Financial Criteria

- A large collection or item that requires extraordinary means outside the organization's ability to care, preserve, and store in perpetuity.

Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis: the HMHC retains the right to accept any/all donated items.

The HMHC will under no circumstances provide monetary appraisals for donated items.

## 10) LOANS

### *a) Loan Conditions*

The History Center will not accept incoming loans or authorize outgoing loans longer than one (1) year in length. Loans will have a clear start and end date, the end date being no longer than one (1) year after loan form is signed.

Any loan items left at the museum after written notification of this loan's expiration and attempts to return the items listed on the form, and after a period of thirty (30) days, shall become the property of the History Center.

The History Center may terminate the agreement of the loan upon written notice. Loans can be updated on an annual basis.

### *b) Incoming Loans*

Loans for temporary exhibits: The History Center will accept objects on loan from individuals and organizations of good standing for exhibit purposes. The History Center will take responsibility for the loaned objects for the allotted time written out in the temporary exhibit contract. The History Center has the right to refuse temporary exhibits for reasons of: cost, risk, and/or other factors that may be detrimental to the History Center and the public trust.

The History Center will not accept objects as long term loans. These items must be given to the History Center either as donations or not at all.

### *c) Outgoing Loans*

Outgoing loans will be evaluated on a case by case basis and only to museums or like institutions in good standing. Exceptions to this policy need to be approved by the Curators and the Museum Manager. An example of exception: a special event for a community group where a relationship has been established. In this case, an



appropriate HMHC Staff Member must be present during the event to ensure the safekeeping of loaned material.

The Curators will ensure that all paperwork concerning the loan is complete, to included signatures from both parties and the dates of the loan clearly stated.

Conditions of loans are to be specifically stated in a Loan Agreement Form.

The HMHC may require the borrower to insure any loaned material at its discretion. Any costs incurred for the above will be the responsibility of the borrowing institution.

#### **d) Insurance on Loans**

- i Incoming loans – borrowed materials will be insured by the Museum, or insured on the lender’s policy, or insurance can be waived in writing. Proof of Insurance will be provided upon request.
- ii Outgoing loans – materials loaned by the Museum will be covered by the borrower’s insurance, or insurance will be waived in writing. By special arrangements, loaned material may be covered by the Museum’s insurance with all associated costs covered by the borrower.

## **11) COLLECTIONS INVENTORIES**

An inventory is a systematic review of collections whereby individual items are physically located and inspected in storage, their location and condition status are reconciled with the collections database, and their individual object catalogue records are updated according to description, provenance and other pertinent catalogue fields. At this time “Found in the Collections” objects are recorded and reconciled with the electronic and hard copy data sets to discover accession provenance, and sub collections are reviewed for duplication. Any of the above information can be used to annotate items that will later be reviewed for recommendation of de-accession.

A proper Inventory Policy will not only enable the HMHC to elevate its role of stewardship to a higher level, it will allow us to fulfill its responsibilities to the communities served by managing the Collections to the best abilities, specifically where the documentation of the said Collections are concerned.

At this time, it is recommended that the Permanent Collection undergo an comprehensive inventory process, followed by a annual “spot-check” or “rolling” inventory. Initiated in 2012, the Comprehensive Inventory Project will be completed in the year 2014, to be reviewed and adjusted annually.

## 12) DE-ACCESSION POLICY

According to accepted standards institutionally and within the Museum Field in general, the HMHC recognizes the de-accession process as a legal, ethical, and practical aspect of museum operations. As a policy particular to the museum, no de-accessioning process should be initiated by itself, but as a result of an inventory process.

### PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

All objects from the Permanent Collections that are approved for de-accession are property of the HMHC, and will be processed by the Curators, Museum Manager, Collections Committee and the Historic Council. The de-accession policy will give the Staff and the Collections Committee the flexibility to accept other potential objects more relevant to both the community and the Mission of the History Center, but also focus the efforts of collecting in-general, to include highlighting weak areas of the Permanent Collection.

Initiating the de-accessions process because of a circumstance such as running out of collections storage space is not recognized as an acceptable justification. This would be an indication that the current CMP needs to be revisited.

In the case that a special, unique, or particularly large de-accession process is initiated, it is strongly advised that a Case Statement be published.

Transfer of de-accessioned items from the Permanent Collections to another non-permanent internal collection, or to another museum, or like institution, is generally the most desirable final disposition. In this way, some of the original intent of the donor is satisfied, and the story behind the items preserved in a possibly similar manner, sometimes more appropriate environment. In the case that a transfer of an item is not possible, the HMHC has the right to publicly sell the object at fair market value to potential buyers. Because the HMHC does not capitalize its Collection, Internal Revenue Service rules require that all proceeds from the sale of de-accessioned items be used strictly to acquire new collection items. This is known as the Collections Acquisitions Fund. (CAF).

#### *a) Criteria for De-accessioning items from Permanent Collections*

De-accessioning objects can be justified with one or more of the following criteria:

**Authenticity** The object has been demonstrated to not be true to its stated maker or origin, and/or has been altered from its original form to such an extent that that its historical significance has been lost.

**Condition** An object's physical integrity has degraded to an extent that it cannot be used for exhibition, is not stable enough for long term storage, and/or presents as a hazardous material that has become or will become a threat to the Permanent Collection or HMHC personnel.

**Cost of Care** Due to an object's condition it will require significant conservation costs in materials, labor, and expertise that are not within the means of the HMHC to provide in the long or short term.

**Documentation** The object is missing basic background history and/or accession paperwork, to include Deed of Gift. These criteria should be used in conjunction with other criteria from this list when possible. If Accession paperwork is missing clear Title and Ownership must still be established; see MN Statute 345.73 Acquiring Title to Undocumented Property; current as of 2009.

**Mission** Due to its provenance and individual history, an Object fails to meet the CMP guidelines and Mission of the HMHC. This would also include duplicates in the Permanent Collection.

**Program Strength** Due to its provenance and individual history, the Objects fails to meet the objectives of the HMHC Permanent and Non-Collection criteria and specifically is not included in, or does not enhance, an ancillary collection. This would also include duplicates in the same Collections. These criteria should be used in conjunction with other criteria from this list when possible, in particular *Mission*.

**Restitution and Repatriation** At this time, an Object that falls under NAGPRA, to include all human remains encountered.

All objects considered for de-accessioning will be reviewed individually using the above criteria, independent of previous work. When making the case for recommending an object for de-accession the Curators will caveat their arguments with considerations for keeping the object in HMHC Collections. When justified, they will utilize more than one criterion to build their case for de-accession.

All objects recommended for de-accessioning by Staff will be reviewed and approved by the Collection Committee and the Board of Directors.

***b) Ethical and Legal Consideration for De-accession***

- No de-accessioned object may be knowingly acquired by any Museum Employee, member of the Historic Council, Volunteer, or by their representatives.
- In the event that a de-accession process is related to, or may become part of, a larger transfer agreement to another museum or like institution, it is advisable that any Staff, Committee Members or members of the Historic Council who have a

- significant association with the receiving institution shall recuse themselves from the recommendation to de-access or the decision making process of de-accession.
- Before recommending the de-accession of any object, the Curators shall be responsible to verify that the History Center has legal ownership to the item and that there are no restrictions or title questions that would impede de-accessioning.
  - If documented restrictions have been placed on the disposal of an item, they should, except in the case of hazardous material, be strictly observed.
  - When necessary, the Collections Committee will seek legal advice in actions involving restrictions and de-accessions.
  - No act of de-accessioning shall conflict with county, state or federal laws, or with the ethical principles established for the Museum in this or any other official document.

**c) *Methods of De-accession***

Methods of de-accession will depend on the condition of the object. Objects deemed a threat to the collection or the health of staff and volunteers will be pre-emptively de-accessioned, prior to formal de-accessioning if necessary.

At the initiation of a de-accession process for Permanent Collections items (initial Staff recommendations) and certainly at the completion of the decision making process [ Historic Council approval], it is recommended that the project be formally announced on at least a regional and local, if not also national level, using contemporary industry publications for the sake of transparency and the fiduciary responsibility of the HMHC to the communities it serves. In this respect, it is also strongly advised that in the case of large, or sensitive de-accessions, that a public forum be provided to the general public, and museum membership, to invite conversation and to give the organization an active and positive platform to make its Case Statement verbally. By these means museums or like institutions will become aware of items that may fit their mission and collecting goals, and receive contact and procedural information about how to acquire those identified objects, while also lending credibility to the process as a whole.

Right of first refusal of the above will be given to internal HMHC Departments; for use to benefit the museum, such as the Education Collection.

Following a pre-determined schedule and deadline not to be less than 30 days, if no offers of transfer to a museum or like institution are made, then the HMHC can offer the de-accessioned object(s) for public sale. The monies from such sales will be placed in a Collections Acquisition Fund to help build the HMHC Collections.

Objects and materials left from the transfer and sale periods can either be recycled through that process once more, reconsidered for accession, or disposed of at the discretion of the HMHC.

***d) Priority List for Final Disposition of de-accessioned items from the Permanent Collection***

- i) Transfer to HMHC Non-Collections [Education, Library, Exhibit Props]
- ii) Transfer to another museum or like institution with similar mission
- iii) Sale to the general public through public means
- iv) Recycle through above process when appropriate
- v) Destroy [may be pre-emptively employed when an items presents as a hazard to the staff and volunteers]. This option also includes the physical recycling of appropriate materials based upon composition, to include paper and metals etc..

**NON-PERMANENT COLLECTIONS**

Items from the HMHC Non-Permanent Collections that have been accessioned, must also be formally de-accessioned. However, the decision making authority to do so rests with the Curators and Museum Manager respectively and solely, due to the nature of those collections. Once a determination of de-accession has been made by those individuals for any reason, they will update the paper and electronic records, and the former will dispose of the items in an appropriate manner, considering disposition scenarios ii) and v) above, in particular.

Processing through the Collections Committee and Board of Directors, and sign off by the Museum Manager are not required for Non-Permanent Collections de-accessioning.

All ethical and legal obligations that pertain specifically to right of ownership and conflict of interest will apply for all Non-Permanent Collections de-accessions.

**13) COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT FUNDS**

In order to give potential donors the opportunity to specifically support Collections based initiatives across the museum, not supported by the HMHC annual budget, the following funds are available:

- a) Collections Acquisitions Fund*
- b) Collections Preservation Fund*

Definitions for each fund will be made available for public consumption upon request and published on the company website.

#### **14) EVOLUTION OF THE MISSION & POLICIES OF THE HMHC**

The HMHC is a dynamic institution influenced by internal and external factors. As fiduciaries of the public trust, the HMHC Historic Council, its Administration and Staff should not allow the CMP to become inconsistent with the Mission of the organization and the Gift Acceptance Policy. Therefore, an annual review of this document by HMHC Leadership is encouraged.

Tom Garcia  
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Approved by the HMHC Historical Council April 2012