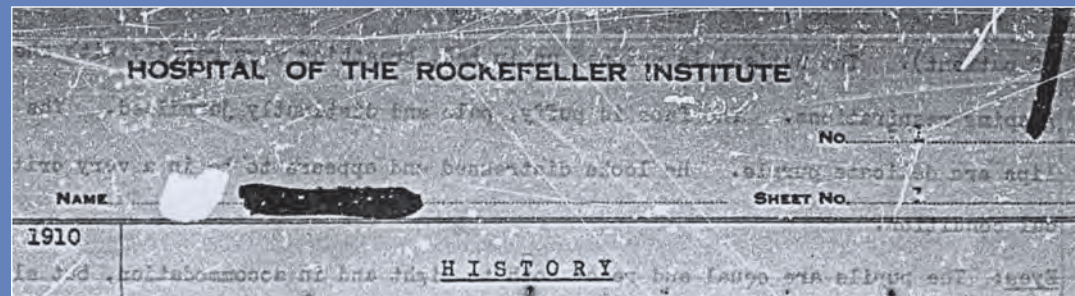# Archiving Patient Research for More Than 94 Years

Terri Collins, Hospital Information Systems

On October 28, 1910, The Rockefeller University Hospital (then called the Hospital of The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research) admitted its first patient (see above). Ninety-four years, seven months, and nine days later, the Rockefeller University Hospital reached a historic milestone by admitting its 50,000th patient.

Fastidiously maintaining such vital data is the responsibility of The Rockefeller University Hospital Information System (HIS) department.

The University's commitment to its extraordinary archive of patient research is absolute. HIS has every medical record on every patient ever seen at the hospital, saved on microfiche, microfilm, or in original hard copy. HIS also maintains a number of registers and hospital-specific statistics – including admissions, discharges and diagnoses – organized by time periods, treating physicians, and laboratories. A separate log of U.S. Naval and Coast Guard personnel treated here between 1942 and 1943 is also maintained.

HIS continues to capture vital statistics today, but now does so electronically, reporting the results to local, state, and federal agencies. HIS has long anticipated the upgrade from paper to electronics. Earlier this year, the Web-based automated information system, ADT, was developed, enabling HIS to capture, maintain, and generate the various registers, indexes, and hospital statistics electronically. The migration from paper to electronic medium continues in the chart retrieval and release function. Implementation of a chart-tracking system using bar code technology will allow HIS to locate charts electronically, rapidly and efficiently.

Lastly, the HIS department is exploring the rapidly evolving technology of speech recognition-directed transcription. Upgrading to a speech recognition system will allow investigators to generate self-transcribed reports, thus providing access to patient data in a more efficient and rapid manner. The pace of change in the requirements for medical documents and the technology to generate them is truly staggering, making HIS an exciting place to work.