Training Module:
Using Patient Portals to Enhance Patient and Family Engagement

Training Slides and Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Training Module:
Using Patient Portals to
Enhance Patient and
Family Engagement

Contents

Training Slides:

The training slides cover a variety of topics including:

- explaining what a patient portal is and what it does
- the reasons to use a patient portal
- the benefits to using a portal for patients, families, and the health care team
- meeting meaningful use objectives
- steps to implement a patient portal
- how to promote a patient portal
- common concerns about patient portals

Training Slides

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Using Patient Portals to Enhance Patient and Family Engagement

August 2013

How to Use These Slides

Purpose

This training module is a resource for Regional Extension Centers (RECs) to support their work with eligible providers (EPs).

The slides and accompanying resources can be used for training EPs about patient portals, including the benefits and implementation steps.

Tips for Using the Slides
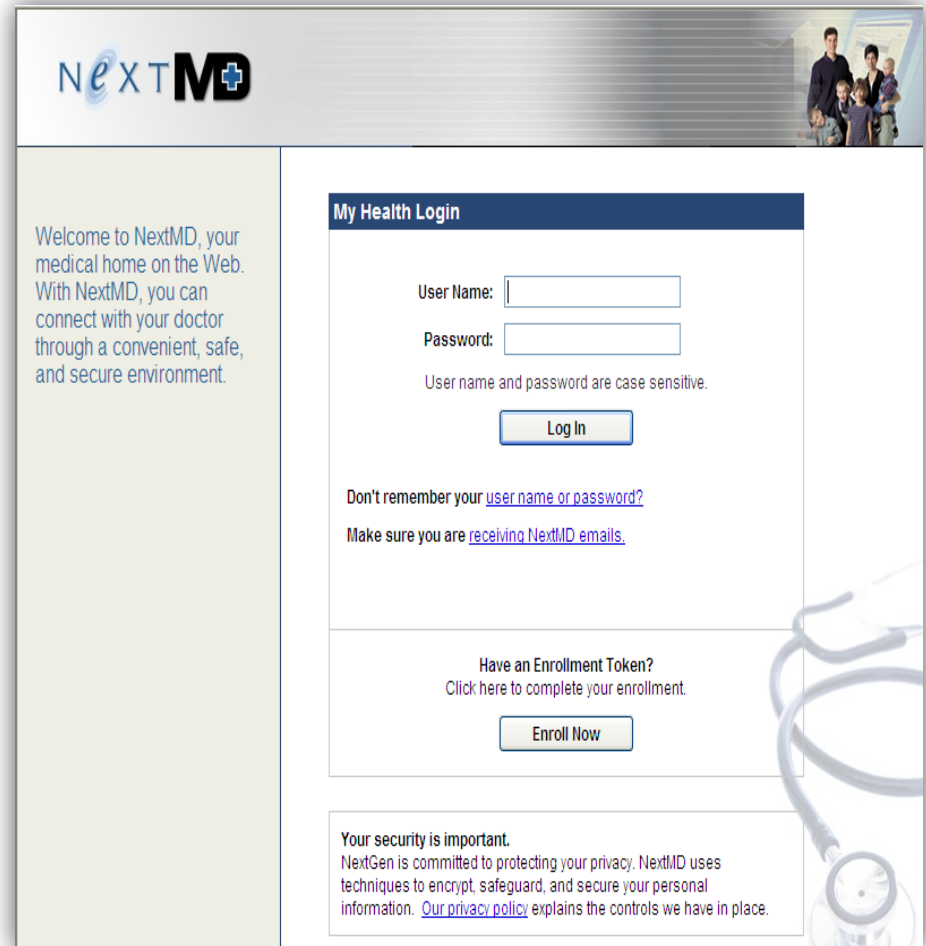
- Use for webinars or face-to-face trainings with EPs

- Adapt for different audiences as needed

- Incorporate content in materials produced by RECs (Examples: newsletters, Web content, training materials)

What is a Patient Portal?

A secure online website that gives patients convenient access to their personal health information.

Patients can view health information about:

- Recent doctor visits

- Discharge summaries

- Medications

- Immunizations

- Allergies

- Lab results

Why Use a Patient Portal?

- Allows patients to **COLLABORATE** with their health care team in health care decisions

- Gives patients a sense of **CONNECTEDNESS** to their health care team

- Provides **VALUE** for both patients and their health care team

A "Win-Win" for Patients, Family, and their Health Care Team

Patient Portals Offer Value for:

Patients/ Family	Patients, Family, and Health Care Team	Health Care Team
Easy access to medical record	Improves communication	Improves workflow efficiency
Quicker access to lab and other test results	Facilitates family's involvement in patient's care	Automates patient access to their medical records
Convenient for making appointments, requesting medication refills, other tasks	Can help patients prepare for office visits	Messages become part of the medical record
		Facilitates use of patient-generated data
		Supports attainment of MU requirements

Meeting Meaningful Use Objectives

Putting the **I** in Health**IT**
www.HealthIT.gov

Patient portals are a great tool to engage patients and their families, improve quality and meet MU objectives.

Meeting Meaningful Use Objectives

Stage 1	Stage 2
Patient and Family Engagement Objectives – Core	
Provide patients with electronic copy of their health information	Provide patients the ability to view online, download, and transmit their health information
Provide patients with clinical summary of office visit (within 3 days)	Provide patients with clinical summary of office visit (within 24 hours)
	Use CEHRT to identify and provide patient-specific educational resources
	Use secure electronic messaging to communicate with patients on relevant health information
Patient and Family Engagement Objectives – Menu	
Provide patients with timely access to their health information	
Use CEHRT to identify and provide patient-specific educational resources.	

Meeting Meaningful Use Objectives

Putting the I in Health IT
www.HealthIT.gov

Additional MU Objectives

CORE

Record patient demographics

Patient reminders for preventive and follow-up care

MENU

Record family history

Steps for Implementing a Patient Portal
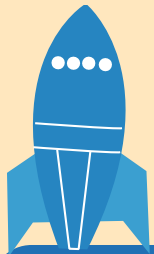
PRE-LAUNCH

Leadership

Priming Staff

Workflow

Measure of Success

Policies and Procedures

Configuration and
    Testing

Promotion
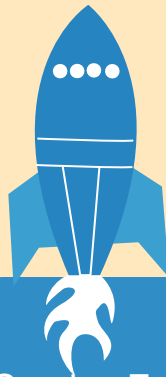
LAUNCH

Service Focus

Tracking Measures of
    Success
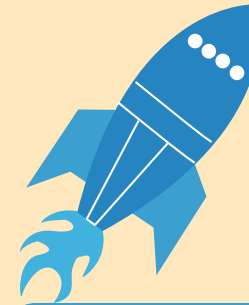
Support

Education

POST-LAUNCH

Continuous Quality Improvement

New Feature Rollout

Continued Support and Education

Step 1: Pre-launch

LEADERSHIP	PRIMING STAFF	WORKFLOW	MEASURES OF SUCCESS
Identify clinical and administrative champions	Engage staff early in the planning process	Conduct analysis of clinical and administrative workflows Use findings to inform policies and procedures	Decide how you will measure success
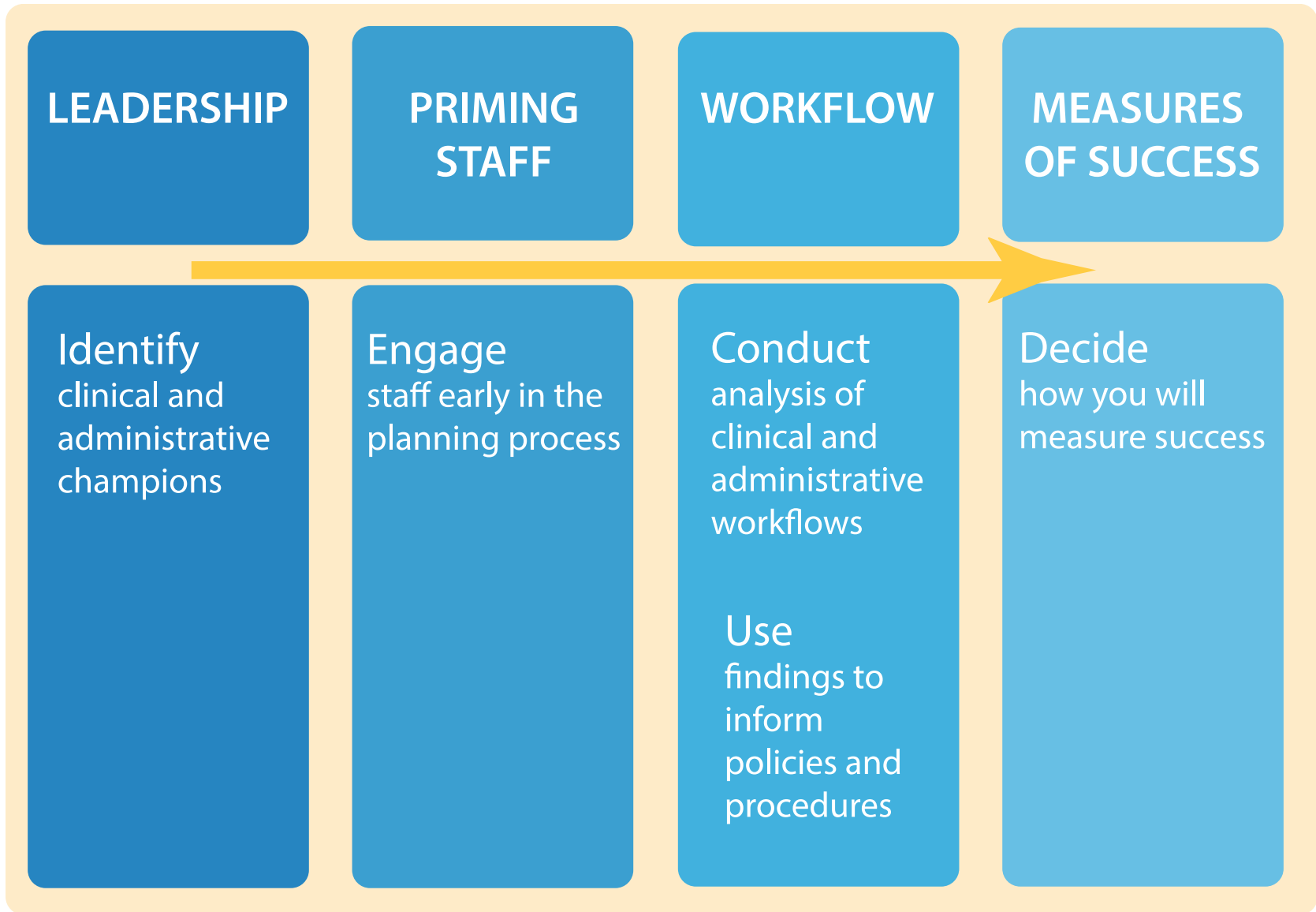
Step 1: Pre-launch

Factors for Success	**Policies and Procedures**	**Configuration and Testing**	**Promotion**
Considerations	Establish policies and procedures ■ Triage and routing ■ Unanswered messages ■ Privacy issues ■ Response times ■ Verify patient identity ■ Proxy access ■ Policies for adolescents ■ Practice contacts	Pilot test with staff or some patients Determine which features to activate initially	Plan and implement a promotion strategy
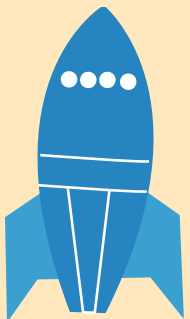
Step 2: Launch

Factors for Success	Service Focus	Tracking Measures of Success	Support	Education
Steps	Get feedback from health care teams, administrative staff, and patients Address issues and concerns	Evaluate success using previously determined measures	Designate staff to help patients with portal registration and use Ask patients about their experience using the portal	Educate patients about benefits and appropriate use
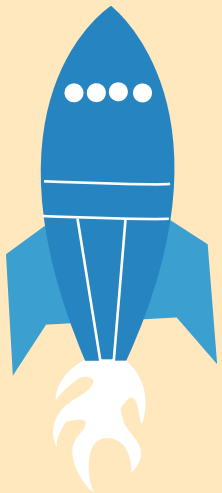
Step 3: Post-launch

Factors for Success	Continuous Quality Improvement	New Feature Rollout	Continued Support and Education
Considerations	Make adjustments and improvements	Rollout additional features over time Ongoing promotion to recruit new portal users and to promote new features	Designated staff provides ongoing support to patients for portal registration and use
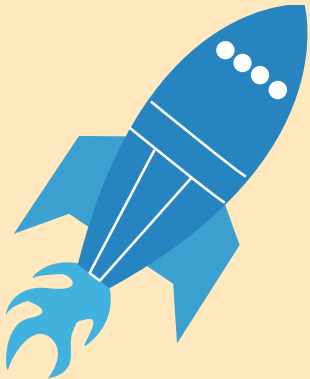
Promoting the Patient Portal

Plan a strategy for promoting the portal—prior to launch and ongoing

- Use signage throughout the clinic

- Distribute fliers and brochures

- Send postcards and letters

- Include promotion as part of telephone on-hold messages and other communications

- Wear promotional buttons or T-shirts ("Ask me about the portal")

- Highlight the benefits to patients and family
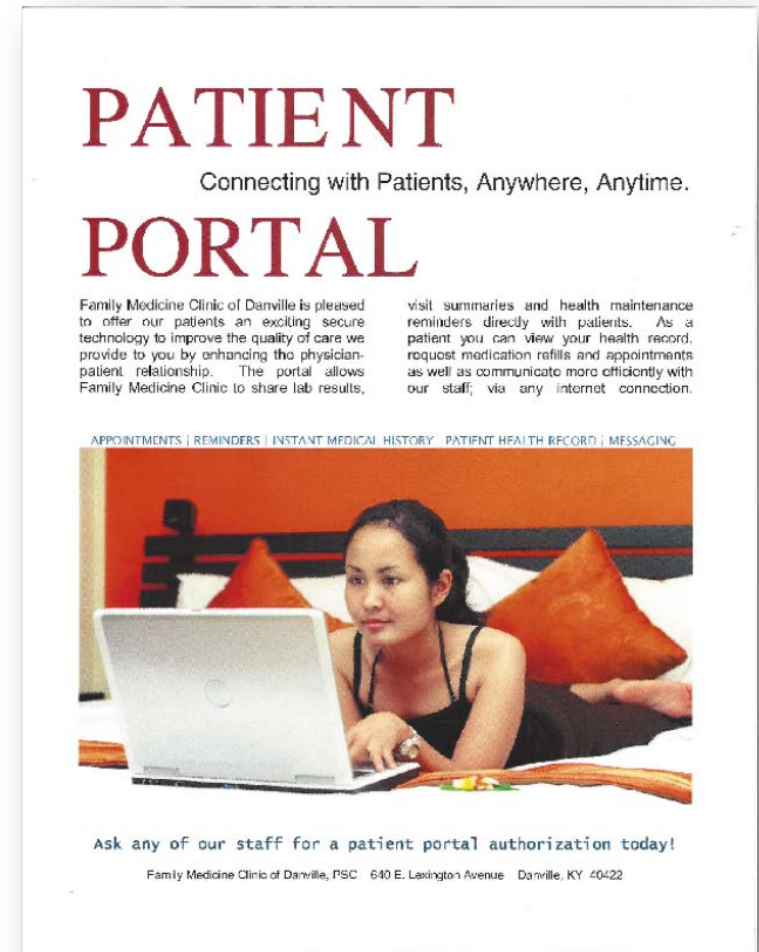
Promoting the Patient Portal

COMING SOON

Patient Portal: Communicate with us from **HOME** or from **ANYWHERE** in the world **and** with any device that has internet access.

- Secure Messaging
- Complete Forms: Saving time at your visit
- Request an Appointment
- Receive Test Results
- MUCH, MUCH, MORE

FIRST STEP: We will need your E-Mail Address.

Sign Up for the Patient Portal

The Primary Health Medical Group Patient Portal is an online tool that gives you limited access to your electronic patient record – and another way to communicate with Dr. Michaud.

- Request & view appointments
- Request a referral
- Update your personal information
- Request a medication refill
- Receive lab results
- Send a secure message to Dr. Michaud and his staff

Let us know you'd like to sign up for the Patient Portal and you'll be given

- A User Name
- A Password
- A Website address

to access your individual account before you leave the clinic today. It's fast and easy!
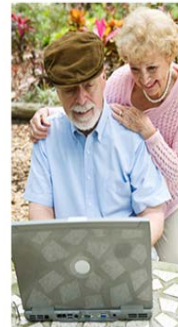
Cuál es la manera más rápida de obtener sus resultados de laboratorio?

www.mirecordmisalud.org

Hable con su médico o un miembro del personal para inscribirse hoy!

- Haga citas con su medico desde su computadora
- Envie correo electrónico a su doctor
- Vea sus resultados de laboratorio
- Renueve sus recetas
- Encuentre información sobre su salud y mucho mas!

THE INSTITUTE FOR FAMILY HEALTH

Common Concerns

	CONCERNS	FACT
Practices will be flooded with e-mail messages	Health care teams report increased efficiency because they can respond to patients at their convenience Telephone volume may decrease when secure messaging is introduced
Patients may use messaging inappropriately	Content of patient messages is generally appropriate, addressing non-urgent care issues Best practice to educate patients about when and how to use secure messaging
Practices unable to bill time for online communication with patients	Patients portals can provide cost savings by decreasing indirect and direct labor costs

Common Concerns

CONCERNS

> **Patients will be confused or upset by information contained within the EHR**

> **Patients won't adapt to using a patient portal**

FACT

> Patients report positive experiences with online access to their health information.
>
> Providers can take a number to steps to help patients understand their information including:
> - Send explanatory message with lab or test results
> - Link to patient education resources
> -

> Most patients favor using online tools to communicate with their health care team, obtain lab results online, and handle other tasks
>
> Medical practices have been successful in getting a wide range of patients—including elderly, lower income, those with chronic illnesses—to use a patient portal

Looking Ahead

Patient-generated data

- Patients can enter relevant information into their EHR via the portal

- Medical devices can be linked to the EHR via the portal (blood glucose readings)

- Patients can enter information about lifestyle, health behaviors, family health history

- May be part of MU Stage 3 requirements

- Many patients already track health data

Looking Ahead

Mobile Applications

- Practices have developed applications for patients to access the portal from smartphones, tablets, and other devices

Support Groups

- Portals can link patients through social networking

- Allows patients to meet online and promotes sharing and support

What providers and patients have to say…

"Our EHR system has increased access for patients and improved our ability to provide great service. Patients can access their health records from their living rooms—even send and receive e-mails if they have questions. The opportunities being presented to patients to take control of their health are quite remarkable."

– *Dr. David Peterman, Primary Health Medical Group, Idaho*

"The patient portal is one reason I love this clinic. I'm able to get through to the doctor. And I can see everything I need to see."

– *Patient, Institute for Family Health*

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Additional Information and Resources

HITRCTraining Module

Use of Secure Electronic Messaging to Enhance Patient and Family Engagement

http://hitrc-collaborative.org/confluence/display/CoPmeaningful/PFE+Tools

Certified Health IT Product List

http://oncchpl.force.com/ehrcert?q=CHPL

California HealthCare Foundation

Patient Portal Resources Center (sample policies and procedures, promotional material templates, videos, and more)

http://www.chcf.org/patient-portals
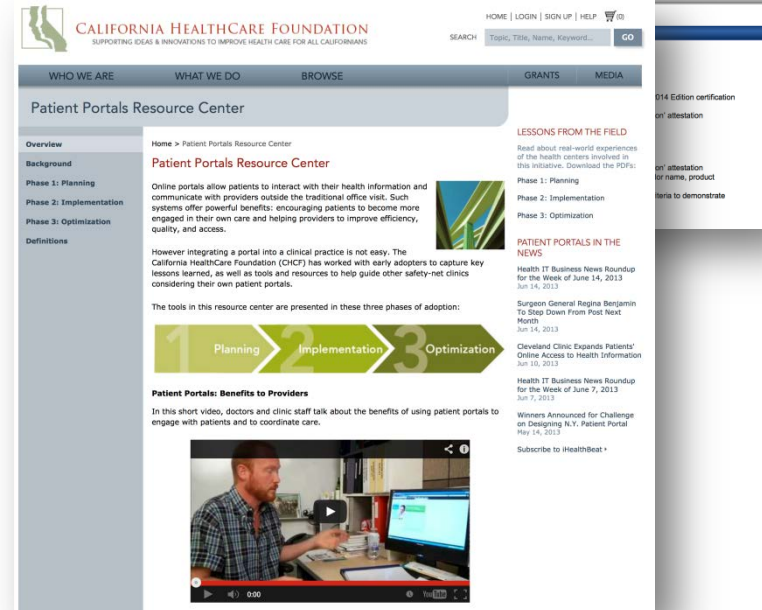
General Patient Portal Information

Patient Portal Fact Sheet

This fact sheet provides background information, meaningful use requirements, common concerns, and tips for launching a patient portal.

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Using Patient Portals in Ambulatory Care Settings

Electronic health records (EHRs) that directly engage patients through a patient portal can be a powerful platform for increasing access, empowering patients, supporting care between visits, and improving health outcomes.

Patient portals can enhance patient-provider communication and enable patients to check test results, refill prescriptions, review their medical record, and view education materials. In addition, patient portals can simplify administrative tasks such as streamlining registration, scheduling appointments, and providing patient reminders. They also allow practices to generate electronic statements and facilitate online payments.

Patients pay more attention and become more engaged in their health and medical care when they have easy access to their health information online.
— *California Health Care Foundation, 2011*

Meaningful Use Requirements

Medical practices can meet a number of the meaningful use requirements by using a robust patient portal. The importance of the patient portal will increase with higher patient engagement thresholds for Stages 2 and 3.

Stage 1 Core Requirements

- Provide patients with an electronic copy of their health information.
- Provide patients with a clinical summary of the office visit.
- Enter or modify personal or demographic information.

Stage 1 Menu Options

- Send reminders to patients for preventive and follow-up care.
- Provide patients with timely electronic access to their health information.
- Identify and provide patient-specific educational resources.

"When we first rolled out the portal to the doctors they thought, 'I'm not going to have time; this is going to be a burden.' Then they realize it actually cuts down on the phone calls and the back and forth."
— *Tracy Morris, Executive Director Primary Health Medical Group*

Patient Portals: Common Concerns and the Facts

Concern	Facts
Providers will be flooded with email messages from patients	Rather than being inundated with messages, **providers report increased efficiency** and appreciate being able to respond to patients at their convenience. Evaluation studies find that telephone volume decreases when secure messaging is introduced.
Patients may use messaging inappropriately.	Studies find that **the communication content of patient messages tends to be appropriate**, addressing non-urgent care issues. Best practice is to educate patients about when and how to use secure messaging.
Clinicians will be unable to bill time for communicating with patients on the portal and the practice will lose revenue.	Portal features have been found to **provide cost savings** by decreasing indirect and direct labor costs, such as mailing costs for lab results, online billing questions versus telephone, online appointment scheduling, and online appointment reminders.
Patients will be confused or upset by information contained within the EHR.	Best practices for displaying test results include **providing a brief explanation and guidance for any follow-up** along with the results.
Patients won't adapt to using a patient portal.	**A majority of consumers favor using online tools** to communicate with providers, obtain lab results online, and make appointments. Medical practices have had success in getting a wide range of patients—including the elderly, lower income, and those with chronic illnesses—to use a patient portal.

Tips for Launching the Portal

- **Advertise the portal** by posting signs, using telephone on-hold messages, distributing flyers and letters to patients, and staff wearing "Ask me about the portal" buttons.

- **Make it everyone's job to encourage using the portal,** from front-desk and telephone staff to physicians. Develop talking points for staff that encourage patients to sign up and use the portal.

- **Develop policies and procedures** for response times for messages and systems for routing and responding to messages.

- **Phase in the portal rollout** by pilot testing it with a few physicians or clinical sites first. Start by activating a few features and rollout new features over time.

- **Minimize potential loss of patient interest** by simplifying the registration process. Try bulk enrollment or having patients register at kiosks in the clinic. Designate staff to assist patients and troubleshoot.

- **Educate patients** about what kinds of communication are appropriate via the portal, how and when providers will use messaging, and when to check the portal for lab results.

Talking Points to Introduce Patients to the Portal:

- Do you use e-mail? The portal is just a secure e-mail system that we can use to communicate.
- You can send me a message and it goes right into your chart, so I have all of your information at hand when I read it and respond.
- If you use it and find you don't like it, you don't have to continue to use it. Just let us know.
- It's really very easy to use. If you use the Internet, you'll most likely find the portal helpful and easy to navigate.

(Source: Primary Health Medical Group)

Sources

Byrne, J.M., Elliott, S., & Firek A. (2009). Initial experience with patient-clinician secure messaging at a VA Medical Center. *Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association*, 16, 267–270. Retrieved from
http://171.67.114.118/content/16/2/267.full.pdf+html

Emont, S. (2011). *Measuring the impact of patient portals: What the literature tells us*. Retrieved from the California Healthcare Foundation website:
http://www.chcf.org/publications/2011/05/measuring-impact-patient-portals

Electronic Health Records in Action: Stories of Meaningful Use
- Blackstone Valley Community Health Center (Spring 2011)
- Dover Family Physicians (Spring 2011)
- Primary Health Medical Group (Winter 2011)
- Patient First Health Care (Winter 2011)

(Available at www.HealthIT.gov)

General Patient Portal Information

Patient Portals FAQs

This patient-facing document provides information on frequently asked questions from patients, including What is a patient portal? Why is it important? What can it be used for? and How do I get access?

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Frequently Asked Questions About the Patient Portal

What Is a Patient Portal?

A patient portal is a secure online website that gives you convenient 24-hour access to your personal health information and medical records—called an Electronic Health Record or EHR—from anywhere with an Internet connection.

Why Is Using a Patient Portal Important?

Accessing your personal medical records through a patient portal can help you be more actively involved in your own health care. Accessing your family members' health information can help you take care of them more easily. Also, patient portals offer self-service options that can eliminate phone tag with your doctor and sometimes even save a trip to the doctor's office.

What Can I Do With a Patient Portal?

The features of patient portals may vary, but typically you can securely view and print portions of your medical record, including recent doctor visits, discharge summaries, medications, immunizations, allergies, and most lab results anytime and from anywhere you have Web access.

Other features may include

- exchanging secure e-mail with your health care team
- requesting prescription refills
- scheduling non-urgent appointments
- checking your benefits and coverage
- updating your contact information
- making payments
- downloading or completing intake forms

A patient portal may also allow you to access these features on behalf of your children or other dependent family members.

How Do I Get Access to a Patient Portal?

Ask your health care providers. If they offer a patient portal, they will provide you with instructions for setting it up. There may be a couple of steps involved in setting up your account, including creating a secure password. This is to make sure only you have access to your health information.

Once your account is set up, you'll be ready to conveniently access your health information and medical records.

Your Health Information Is Private, Secure, and Protected

Patient portals have privacy and security safeguards in place to protect your health information.

- To make sure that your private health information is safe from unauthorized access, patient portals are hosted on a secure connection and accessed via an encrypted, password-protected logon.

- EHRs also have an "audit trail" feature that keeps a record of who accessed your information, what changes were made, and when.

- Although patient portals use safeguards, there are other safety tips you should follow when accessing the patient portal. Always remember to protect your username and password from others and make sure to only log on to the patient portal from a personal or secure computer.

General Patient Portal Information

Resources

Patient Portal Videos

These two videos give both patient and provider perspectives on the benefits of using patient portals, including using portals for engaging patients, communicating with clinic staff, and coordinating and/or managing care.

Videos can be accessed at:

http://www.chcf.org/patient-portals

[From the California Healthcare Foundation Patient Portal Resource Center]

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Pre-Launch

Pre-launch Checklist

This checklist supplements the information provided in the patient portal training module slides. It gives providers and organizations information on the steps for planning a successful launch of a patient portal. It also includes information on leadership, priming staff, workflow, policies and procedures, patient feedback, configuration and testing, promotion, and measures for success.

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Patient Portal Checklist

Step 1: Pre-launch
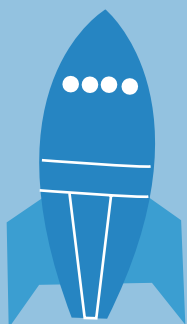
Leadership	☐	Identify clinical and administrative champions
	☐	Engage staff early in the planning process
Priming Staff	☐	Seek input from health care teams and administrative staff (for example, priority features of the patient portal to activate, workflow considerations)
	☐	Provide orientation and training
	☐	Plan for ongoing support for health care teams and administrative staff (such as identifying "super users" to provide one-on-one support)
Workflow	☐	Conduct an analysis of clinical and administrative workflows to determine how the patient portal can best be integrated into practice
	☐	Use the workflow analysis findings to guide policies and procedures
Policies and Procedures	☐	Establish portal policies and procedures for patients and health care teams in the following areas - registration process - verification of patient identity - consent forms for patient portal use - triage and routing of messages - handling unanswered messages - response times - privacy issues - proxy access - policies for adolescents - practice contacts to assist patients
Configuration and Testing	☐	Pilot test portal with a sample of providers, staff and/or patients
	☐	For a multisite practice, pilot test in a single clinic or subset of clinics
	☐	Activate select features to start; choose the most straightforward features that are valued by health care teams and patients/families
Promotion	☐	Plan and implement a promotion strategy to make patients aware of the patient portal and the benefits of using the portal
	☐	Develop promotional materials (such as signage, buttons, brochures, website messages)
	☐	Determine everyone's role in promoting the patient portal; provide guidance and talking points for promotion
Measures of Success	☐	Determine how to measure success of the patient portal Possible measures include - number of patients who register - number of patients who are active users - uptake among specific patient populations - uptake among providers - patient satisfaction - health care team and administrative staff satisfaction

Pre-Launch: Sample Policies and Procedures, Consent Forms, Access Forms

Resources

Patient Portal Policy and Procedures

This is an example from a health center's Patient Portal Policy and Procedures manual that addresses the main activities in support of patient portal operations.
The manual can be accessed at:

http://www.chcf.org/~/media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/P/PDF%20PatientPortalsShastaPoliciesProcedures.pdf

[From the California Healthcare Foundation Patient Portal Resource Center]

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Pre-Launch: Sample Policies and Procedures, Consent Forms, Access Forms

MyChart Patient Portal Flowchart

This example of a clinic workflow chart displays tasks that track a patient portal query from receipt through task completion in an outpatient center.

[From the California Healthcare Foundation Patient Portal Resource Center]

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

MyChart Patient Portal

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[AM morning huddle] → [Provider and MA determine MyChart candidates] → [MyChart notation made in Appt Notes] → [Patient is brought to room] → [MA does vitals and introduces MyChart] → [Patient agrees to MyChart Activation] → ◇ Care team decision point ◇
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[MyChart is officially activated] ← [Releases Patient Problem List & Hx Labs @his/her descretion] ← [Provider notes MyChart Active] ← [Patient enters User Name and Password] ← [EMR is secured and MyChart Login screen appears] ← [MA selects MyChart Activation] ← [In room Activation] ← Or
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[Patient activates MyChart at home with secure activation code] ← [Letter is printed out and handed to patient] ← [Activation Letter or AVS activation]
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[Patient opens MyChart from home] ← [Activation letter is posted in AVS & given to Pt]
```

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[Sends Provider Message] → [Message arrives in Provider In-Basket] → [Provider or RN reads and responds] → [Message is sent to patient MyChart] → [Patient notified in personal email of provider message] → (Message becomes MyChart Encounter or left as Pt. message)
```

```
[Requests refill] → [Refill request arrives in provider In-basket] → [Provider or RN open refill encounter with message] → [Provider Ok's or denies refill and closes encounter] → [Response is sent to pharmacy] → (Meds List and Chart updated with changes)
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[Appt requests] → [Patient enters preferred dates and times with reason for appt] → [Request arrives in Front Desk Pool] → [Front Desk either schedules appt or forwards request to care team] → [Patient is notified by either front desk or care team to schedule appt] → (Appt is made)
```

```
[Appt Cancellations] → [Patient enters cancellation request] → [Appt is cancelled and front desk is notified] → (Front desk notifies care team)
```

```
[Demographic changes] → [Ochin updates Demographics] → (Message sent to Front Desk Pool, informing of change)
```

MyChart Patient Portal

T. Flint 9/2011

Pre-Launch: Sample Policies and Procedures, Consent Forms, Access Forms

Resources

Patient Portal Use Agreement Form

This form outlines the basic responsibilities for patients and providers in using the patient portal. Instructions for customizing the agreement form for a particular practice or organization are also included.

[From the HITRC Privacy and Security Toolkit Workgroup]

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Patient Portal Use Agreement

INSTRUCTIONS

The Patient Portal Use Agreement (Attachment A) that has been provided requires some areas to be filled in, and others to be reviewed and/or edited, to ensure the document is complete. Once completed, it is important that it is reviewed by all staff members, distributed to patients and enforced as stated. It may be necessary to make other adjustments as necessary based on the characteristics of your portal, as well as other federal and state regulatory requirements.

Goals

The goal of this document is to reduce the liability for providers who utilize patient portals. This was done by addressing some of the liabilities directly, and by outlining the basic obligations of patients and providers in using the portal.

Assumptions

The Liability Workgroup that drafted this document followed certain guidelines or assumptions in drafting. These should be considered when adopting this document:

1. This document considers the restrictions of HIPAA, but does not account for state privacy and security laws, nor does it account for other federal laws, such as those regarding substance abuse records.
2. This document assumes that practices will be generally HIPAA compliant, including having a Notice of Privacy Practices that covers a patient's basic rights under HIPAA.
3. This document does not address third-party vendor issues.
4. This document assumes that practices would not be charging for portal use.

Portal Activities

This Use Agreement addresses the use of the patient portal for both secure messaging between patients and providers, and for patients to view their own health information. If your practice is utilizing the portal for only one of these purposes, you should carefully review the sections highlighted in yellow and green to make sure they apply to your intended uses.

Highlighted Sections

Yellow – These provisions are related to secure messaging only, and should be removed if you are not using the portal for that purpose.

Green – These provisions are related to viewing health information through the portal only, and should be removed if you are not using the portal to allow patients to view their information.

Blue – These are areas that you need to review and potentially revise, depending on the structure and format of your portal and practice.

Following removal of the non-applicable sections, be sure to review the document for any grammatical changes that may be necessary as a result:

Section	Description	Information/Instruction	Reviewed/Notes
Intro	Practice Name	[PRACTICE] should be replaced throughout the document with the name of your practice.	
I	What is the Portal?	Provides an overview of the portal and its uses. Should be reviewed and revised depending on your practice's intended portal uses. NOTE: The last phrase in this section addresses the additional activity of payment facilitation, which may not apply in all cases and should be removed if not applicable.	
II	What services does our Portal provide?	This is not a comprehensive list, but includes the top uses of which the Liability Workgroup was aware. Additional uses can be added, and inapplicable uses should be removed. NOTE: If you are using the portal for one of these purposes, but it is limited, that should be noted. (For example, if patients can access their medical record, but would only be able to view a limited set of data, this should be mentioned.)	
III	Is our Portal private?	Specific security measures can be listed or inserted in the first sentence, but would then require updating if any changes are made. NOTE: This assumes that the portal uses secure sockets layer technology (i.e. https is in the website URL). If yours does not, you should substitute the applicable technology in for this term.	
IV	Is there a charge for using our Portal?	As mentioned above, this document assumes there is no additional charge for the use of the Portal.	
V	Acknowledgement of Rights, Responsibilities and Rules	Review each provision carefully to be sure it applies to your practice, and that you are utilizing the methods described.	
VI	[PRACTICE] Rights and Responsibilities	Review each provision carefully to be sure it applies to your practice, and that you are utilizing the methods described.	
VII	Revoking this Agreement	This should be reviewed with staff, so they know the method for revocation. It may be beneficial to draft a revocation form, or you can have them revoke by signing and indicating revocation at the bottom of their original agreement.	
VIII	Disclaimer	This section provides a general disclaimer for cyber risks. Review it to make sure it aligns with how your Portal operates.	
Conclusion	Acknowledgement and Patient Information	Be sure this is complete and accurate. Fill in your practice contact information.	

Attachment A

[INSERT PRACTICE NAME & LOGO]

<u>Patient Portal Use Agreement</u>

This Patient Portal Use Agreement ("Agreement") provides an explanation of your rights and responsibilities in using the [PRACTICE] patient portal ("Portal"), along with the rights and responsibilities of [PRACTICE] in operating the Portal.

I. <u>What is the Portal?</u> The Portal is a combination of Web-based programs that allows you to access your health information and allows for two-way communications between you, your healthcare providers and their staff. The Portal provides the ability to access past and present portions of your own protected health information (i.e. your medical and billing records), including information obtained or created after the date on which this Agreement was signed, as maintained by our office. You may access the Portal online through the Internet, which will allow you to take a more active role in your health care and/or facilitate payment for services provided.

II. <u>What services does our Portal provide?</u> Our Portal is a secure web portal that allows you to:
   a. Access your electronic medical record online
   b. Enter medical history information
   c. Review and print your medication list
   d. Exchange messages with your provider
   e. Schedule and view upcoming appointments
   f. View lab reports
   g. Refill prescriptions
   h. Register with a new provider
   i. Update personal information
   j. View account history and statements
   k. Request and receive web consultations
   l. Review educational materials for your specific health needs or general educational materials provided to all patients
   m. Receive appointment and medication reminder notices

III. <u>Is our Portal private?</u> Yes. This Portal uses industry standard security measures to reduce the possibility that an unauthorized person may/could intercept the communications between the Portal and the receiving personal computer. This technology is similar to the technology banks use for their online banking services. Secure messages and information can only be read by someone who knows the right password or pass-phrase to log in to the Portal site. Because the connection between the computer and the website uses secure sockets layer technology, you can read or view information on your computer, but it is still concealed in transmission between the website and your computer. This method of transmitting prevents unauthorized parties from being able to access or read information while it is being sent. No system is perfect and we will do our best to maintain electronic security. However, keeping information secure depends on four additional factors that require your cooperation and assistance:
   a. The secure message must reach the correct personal email address;
   b. You must ensure that this personal email address is maintained and it is accessed on a regular basis;
   c. The Portal User ID and password are considered personal identifiers and are used to control access to our Portal; therefore, you agree not to share or otherwise disclose them for any reason to anyone, including family members; and
   d. You must notify us immediately if your User ID and password are stolen or otherwise jeopardized [insert contact information here].

IV. <u>Is there a charge for using our Portal?</u> No, the Portal is provided as a courtesy to our patients at this time. However, [PRACTICE] has the right to charge for this service upon notice in the future, as allowed by law. If [PRACTICE] begins charging for Portal use at any time, you will still have the right to access your records through our office medical records staff, as provided in our Notice of Privacy Practices.

V. Acknowledgement of Rights, Responsibilities and Rules. By using the Portal, you agree to and understand the following rights, responsibilities and rules that apply to use of our Portal:

    a. Using our Portal is entirely voluntary and will not impact the quality of care you receive from [PRACTICE] should you decide not to use our Portal. This office will not condition treatment or payment for health care on whether or not you use the Portal or sign this agreement.

    b. Your Portal communications are evaluated and responded to by appropriate authorized personnel. This office's ability to respond immediately is not guaranteed.

    c. You agree you will not use the Portal for emergencies or urgent matters. If you have symptoms or a health-related concern that requires urgent attention, such as [uncontrollable bleeding or chest pain], you should seek immediate care at the nearest emergency room or immediately contact emergency medical personnel by phone at 9-1-1.

    d. The communications that occur through our Portal between you and your provider and his/her staff may become a part of your medical record. You agree to only send truthful and accurate information about you to [PRACTICE] through your Portal account.

    e. Diagnosis will not be done solely through our Portal. A diagnosis can only be made and treatment rendered after you schedule an appointment and see a provider.

    f. No request for narcotic pain medication or refills will be accepted through a Portal request, if you are not currently being treated by this [PRACTICE].

    g. It is your responsibility to maintain the User ID and password in a secure location that is inaccessible to anyone. It is also your responsibility to keep track of who has access to your email account so that only you, or someone you authorize, can see the messages received from us.

    h. For security purposes, you agree to log off of your account when you are not using it.

    i. If there is information that you do not want sent via online communication, you must inform [PRACTICE] in writing.

    j. You should report to [PRACTICE] any information that appears inaccurate about your health care and/or billing, and any other indications that your information may have been compromised.

    k. You should also inform [PRACTICE] of any changes to your e-mail address.

VI. [PRACTICE] Rights and Responsibilities.

    a. This office will not include health care or billing details in emails sent to your personal email address. Personal information will only be included in communications sent through our Portal.

    b. This office may, but is not required to, audit all content, access, and information stored in or passing through our Portal.

    c. This office is not liable for any claims and/or damages arising from the following:

       i. Inaccurate or incomplete information provided by you through the Portal.

      ii. Interruption in the ability to access our Portal due to technical difficulties, technical maintenance, or system failure.

     iii. Access of protected health information through our Portal due to your negligent sharing or loss of your User ID and password or leaving our Portal accessible when unattended. Any protected health information accessed in this manner may be available to others and is no longer protected by this office's privacy practices.

      iv. Any and all claims due to access by anyone else to any and all protected health information printed and/or downloaded by you from our Portal.

      v. Unauthorized access and/or use of the Portal by you that includes, but is not limited to, a violation of the HIPAA Privacy or Security, HITECH, State, and/or local laws.

      vi. Your intentional breaking/exploiting of this Agreement and/or Portal security measures, such as through malware or other tools or techniques.

d. This office has the right to deactivate your access to the Portal at any time, suspend or terminate our Portal offering or modify the services offered through our Portal for any reason, including, but not limited to, suspicion of unauthorized or inappropriate use of our Portal. You will continue to have access to your medical records through direct contact with the office, as required by HIPAA.

e. This office reserves the right to modify the terms and conditions of this agreement and overall layout of our Portal as necessary at any time.

VII. Revoking this Agreement. This Agreement remains in effect until you, your legal guardian, or your Personal Representative, cancel it in writing to [PRACTICE]. Your cancellation request will not apply to any use, access, disclosure, and/or communication already made under this Agreement.

VIII. Disclaimer. [PRACTICE] Portal may provide you with links to a third party website not owned, operated or affiliated with [PRACTICE]. [PRACTICE] has no control over these websites or content on them and do not endorse the content with any hyper linked website. I agree to not hold the [PRACTICE] responsible, nor liable, directly or indirectly, for any claim in connection with computer viruses, Trojan horses, or other code that manifests contaminating with destructive properties to computers. Please let us know if you discover any inaccurate, inappropriate, or contaminated hyperlink.

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form. I have been given the risks and benefits of the patient Portal and understand the risks associated with online communications between [PRACTICE] and patient, and consent to the conditions outlined herein. In addition, I agree to adhere to the policies set forth herein, as well as any other instructions or guidelines that [PRACTICE] may impose for using the Portal. I have been proactive about asking questions related to this agreement. All of my questions have been answered with clarity. By signing below, I hereby give my informed consent to participate in [PRACTICE] Portal, and I hereby agree to and accept all of the provisions contained above.

A copy of this Agreement will be provided to you and one will be also be included in your [PRACTICE] medical record.

Date: _____   Effective Until: _____

Name: _____   Signature: _____

Email Address: _____   Telephone Number: _____

Personal Representative Relationship: _____

Personal Representative Signature: _____

For more information about this Agreement or about the Portal generally, please contact [PRACTICE] at [phone] or [email].

Resources

Pre-Launch: Sample Policies and Procedures, Consent Forms, Access Forms

MyChart Proxy Access Sign-up Forms

These examples of Proxy Access Forms are used for granting parents, legal guardians, caregivers, or others access to a patient's portal account. Examples include the Adult to Adult Access Form, the Adult to Teen Access Form, and the Legal Guardian or Durable Power of Attorney Access Form.

[From the Institute for Family Health, New York]

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Giving Others Access to Your Health Information

- A proxy is a person who can access your health information as if he/she were you.
- As your proxy, a spouse, adult child, caregiver or other person of your choice may be granted full access to the health information about you that is included in the MyChart system.
- In order to authorize a proxy (who must be age 18 or over) to view your information in MyChart, please complete the form below.
- Authorization for proxy access to an adult patient's account is valid until the patient's account is inactivated or until revoked by the patient.
- Authorization for proxy access to a child's account is available with some age restrictions (see below) and is also available until the child's account is inactivated, the proxy access is revoked, or the child turns age 18.

1. Patient Information (Patient - *Child or Adult* - for whom proxy access is requested):

Patient Name: _____
                   (last, first, middle initial)

Address:_____ **Apartment #:**____
              Street   City   State Zip

Date of Birth: ___/___/___   **Phone Number:** _____

2. Proxy Information (Person – *Adult Only* - who will access the above patient's medical information by proxy)

Proxy Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____
                  (last, first, middle initial)

Address:_____ **Apartment #:**____
              Street   City   State Zip

Date of Birth: ___/___/___   **Phone Number:** _____

Are you a patient at this health center? ☐Yes   ☐ No

FOR HEALTH CENTER USE ONLY

Application and required documents reviewed and scanned by: _____

Date:_____

Approved by:_____

Date:_____

Patient Name: _____

Patient Date of Birth: ___/___/___

Please check the box below:

☐

> **I authorize another adult to have access to my MyChart record.**
>
> **I authorize the Institute for Family Health to disclose my Protected Health Information through MyChart to the designated proxy named above.**
>
> **The following information is to be released:** Any and all Protected Health Information about me that is included in the MyChart system (restrictions apply for Adult-Child access based on age range restrictions as explained in the Adult-Child information box). This may include information relating to sexually transmitted diseases, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It may also include information about behavioral or mental health services, and treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.
>
> - I understand that I may refuse to sign this authorization and that my refusal will not affect my ability to obtain treatment.
> - I understand that I have the right to revoke this authorization at any time directly through MyChart or by sending a MyChart message or written request to my health center.
> - I understand that my proxy may not be subject to the federal Health Information Portability and Accountability Act ("HIPAA") and that my proxy may further disclose the health information about me that they see in MyChart, and that such information will no longer be protected by HIPAA.
> - I understand that MyChart is intended as a secure online source of confidential health information. If I share my MyChart ID and/or password with another person, that person may be able to view my or my child's health information, and the health information of anyone who has authorized me as a MyChart proxy.
> - I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to select a confidential password, to maintain my password in a secure manner, and to change my password if I believe confidentiality/privacy may have been compromised in any way.
>
> **I acknowledge that I have read and understand this authorization. I agree to its terms and choose to designate the person named above as my MyChart proxy, thereby allowing them access to my medical information through MyChart.**
>
> _____   Date: _____
>
> Signature of Patient

Giving Others Access to Your Health Information

- A proxy is a person who can access a patient's health information as if he/she were that patient.
- As proxy, a parent or guardian may be granted full access to the health information about his/her child that is included in the MyChart system.
- In order to gain access to your child's information in MyChart, please complete the form below.
- Authorization for proxy access to a child's account is available with some age restrictions (see below) and is available until the child's account is inactivated, the proxy access is revoked, or the child turns age 18.

1. Patient Information (Patient - *Child* - for whom proxy access is requested):

Patient Name: _____
                    (last, first, middle initial)

Address:_____ **Apartment #:**____
            Street   City   State Zip

Date of Birth: __/___/___   **Phone Number:** _____

2. Proxy Information (Person – *Adult Only, over age 18* - who will access the above patient's medical information by proxy)

Proxy Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____
                (last, first, middle initial)

Address:_____ **Apartment #:**____
            Street   City   State Zip

Date of Birth: __/___/___   **Phone Number:** _____

Are you a patient at this health center? ☐Yes   ☐ No

FOR HEALTH CENTER USE ONLY

Application and required documents reviewed and scanned by: _____

Date: _____

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Patient Date of Birth: __/__/__

Please check the box below:

☐

<u>I request access to my minor child's MyChart record</u>

Check the relationship authorizing access:

- Custodial Parent (parent responsible for child's health care)
- Legal Guardian (copy of court order required for verification)

- The following age restrictions for MyChart access: If your child is under **age 10:** You will be granted full access to your child's MyChart record
- If your child is over **age 10 but under age 18:** You will be granted partial access to your child's MyChart record. Access is limited by privacy laws. *Once your child reaches age 18, you will no longer have access to your child's MyChart record*.

I request that The Institute for Family Health provide me with access as a proxy to my child's Protected Health Information through MyChart.

The following information is to be released: Any and all Protected Health Information that is included in the MyChart system (restrictions apply for Adult-Child access based on age range restrictions).

- I understand that MyChart is intended as a secure online source of confidential health information. If I share my MyChart ID and/or password with another person, that person may be able to view my or my child's health information, and the health information of anyone who has authorized me as a MyChart proxy.
- I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to select a confidential password, to maintain my password in a secure manner, and to change my password if I believe confidentiality/privacy may have been compromised in any way.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand this authorization. I agree to its terms.

_____   Date: _____

Signature of Proxy

The Institute for Family Health   **MYCHART PROXY SIGN UP**

Giving Others Access to Your Health Information

- A proxy is a person who can access your health information as if he/she were you.
- As your proxy, a spouse, adult child, caregiver or other person of your choice may be granted full access to the health information about you that is included in the MyChart system.
- In order to authorize a proxy (who must be age 18 or over) to view your information in MyChart, please complete the form below.
- Authorization for proxy access to an adult patient's account is valid until the patient's account is inactivated or until revoked by the patient.
- Authorization for proxy access to a child's account is available with some age restrictions (see below) and is also available until the child's account is inactivated, the proxy access is revoked, or the child turns age 18.

1. Patient Information (Patient - *Child or Adult* - for whom proxy access is requested):

Patient Name: _____
                    (last, first, middle initial)

Address:_____ **Apartment #:**____
                    Street   City   State Zip

Date of Birth: __/___/___   **Phone Number:** _____

2. Proxy Information (Person – *Adult Only* - who will access the above patient's medical information by proxy)

Proxy Name: _____ **Relationship:** _____
                    (last, first, middle initial)

Address:_____ **Apartment #:**____
                    Street   City   State Zip

Date of Birth: __/___/___   **Phone Number:** _____

Are you a patient at this health center? ☐ Yes   ☐ No

FOR HEALTH CENTER USE ONLY

Application and required documents reviewed and scanned by: _____

Date:_____

Approved by:_____

Date:_____

Patient Name:_____

Patient Date of Birth: __/__/__

Please check the box below:

☐

> ## <u>I request access to another adult's MyChart as a legal guardian or under a Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care</u>
>
> **Check the relationship authorizing access**
>
> ☐ Legal Guardian (copy of court order required for verification)
> ☐ Durable Power of Attorney for Health care (DPOA) (copy of DPOA required for verification)
>
> **I request that The Institute for Family Health provide me with access as a proxy to another person's Protected Health Information through MyChart.**
>
> **The following information is to be released:** Any and all Protected Health Information that is included about the patient in the MyChart system . This may include information relating to sexually transmitted diseases, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). It may also include information about behavioral or mental health services, and treatment for alcohol and drug abuse.
>
> - I understand that MyChart is intended as a secure online source of confidential health information. If I share my MyChart proxy ID and/or password with another person, that person may be able to view the health information of the patient whose MyChart account I am authorized to access as proxy.
> - I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to select a confidential password, to maintain my password in a secure manner, and to change my password if I believe confidentiality/privacy may have been compromised in any way.
>
> **I acknowledge that I have read and understand this authorization. I agree to its terms.**
>
> _____ Date: _____
>
> Signature of Proxy

Pre-Launch: Sample Policies and Procedures, Consent Forms, Access Forms

Patient Portal Consent Form

This example of a consent form provides information for patients on the purpose of the consent form, how the portal works, how health information is protected, types of online communication, and patient acknowledgement.

[From NYC Reach]

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Patient Portal – Consent Form Template:

Purpose of this Form:

PHYSICIAN OFFICE NAME offers secure viewing and communication as a service
to patients who wish to view parts of their records and communicate with our staff and
physicians. Secure messaging can be a valuable communications tool, but has certain
risks. In order to manage these risks we need to impose some conditions of participation.
This form is intended to show that you have been informed of these risks and the
conditions of participation, and that you accept the risks and agree to the conditions of
participation.

How the Secure Patient Portal Works:

A secure web portal is a type of webpage that uses encryption to keep unauthorized
persons from reading communications, information, or attachments. Secure messages
and information can only be read by someone who knows the right password or pass-
phrase to log in to the portal site. Because the connection channel between your computer
and the website uses secure sockets layer technology you can read or view information on your
computer, but it is still encrypted in transmission between the website and your computer.

Protecting Your Private Health Information and Risks:

This method of communication and viewing prevents unauthorized parties from being able
to access or read messages while they are in transmission. No transmission system is perfect and
we will do our best to maintain electronic security. However, keeping messages secure depends
on two additional factors:
1) the secure message must reach the correct email address, and
2) only the correct individual (or someone authorized by that individual) must be able to have
access to the message.

Only you can make sure these two factors are present. **It is imperative that our practice has
your correct e-mail address and that you inform us of any changes to your e-mail address.**
You also need to keep track of who has access to your email account so that only you, or
someone you authorize, can see the messages you receive from us.

You are responsible for protecting yourself from unauthorized individuals learning your
password. If you think someone has learned your password, you should promptly go to the
website and change it.

Types of Online Communication/Messaging:

**Online communications should never be used for emergency communications or urgent
requests. If you have an emergency or an urgent request, you should contact your
physician via telephone.**

If there is information that you don't want transmitted via online communication, please inform your practice.

Patient Acknowledgement and Agreement:

I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand this consent form and the Policies and Procedures regarding the Patient Portal that appears at log in. I understand the risks associated with online communications between my physician and me, and consent to the conditions outlined herein. In addition, I agree to follow the instructions set forth herein, including the Policies and Procedures set forth in the log in screen, as well as any other instructions that my physician may impose to communicate with patients via online communications. I understand and agree with the information that I have been provided.

# Launch

Launch Checklist

This checklist supplements the information provided in the patient portal training module slides. It gives providers and organizations information on the steps for executing a successful launch of a patient portal. It also includes information on services focus, tracking measures of success, support, promotion, and education.

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Patient Portal Checklist

Step 2: Launch
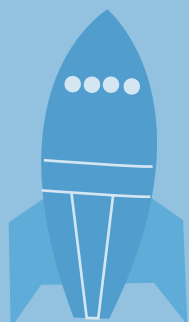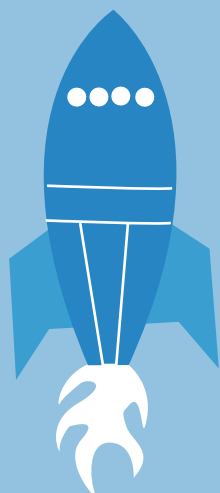
Service Focus	☐ Get feedback from health care teams, administrative staff, and patients/families on experience with the portal

	To get feedback
	   - discuss with health care teams and administrative staff
	   - conduct patient/family survey or focus group
	   - get input from patient/family advisory group

Provide Ongoing Support to Patients	☐ Designate staff to help patients register for and use the portal
Promotion	☐ Implement the promotion strategy
	☐ Monitor implementation of the promotion strategy to ensure steps are carried out as planned; adjust plan as needed
	☐ Remind and support health care teams and administrative staff to use "talking points" to encourage patients to register for the patient portal and to use it appropriately
Education	☐ Provide ongoing support to health care teams and administrative staff (such as refresher training, one-on-one support from "super users")
	☐ Educate patients about appropriate use of the portal (for example, have health care teams and administrative staff use talking points; thank patients when they use the portal appropriately)
Tracking Measures of Success	☐ Evaluate success of the patient portal

	Possible measures include
	   - number of patients who register
	   - number of patients who are active users
	   - uptake among specific patient populations
	   - uptake among providers
	   - patient satisfaction
	   - health care team and administrative staff satisfaction

Launch

Templates for Promotional Materials

These marketing templates provide promotional examples of posters, presentation slides, and flyers in both English and Spanish that can be adapted and modified by practices.

[From the California Healthcare Foundation Patient Portal Resource Center]

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Requesting Your Appointment Has
Never Been So Easy

Connect to our FREE patient website. It's fast, easy and you never have to listen to on hold music again!

- Request or Change Appointments
- Safely Email Your Doctor
- View Lab Results
- Request Prescription Refills
- View Medical Records

Sign Up Today!

For more information ask the front desk or go to www.portalname.com.

Insert logo here

Solicitar una cita nunca ha sido tan fácil.

Es rápido, fácil y nunca tendrá que escuchar música en espera otra vez!

- Solicite o cambie citas
- Envíe un correo electrónico seguro a su medico.
- Vea los resultados de laboratorio.
- Solicite relleno de medicamento.
- Vea los expedientes médicos

¡Inscríbase hoy!

Para más información pregunte en recepción o visite el sitio web: www.portalname.com

Insert logo here

Want to Ask Your Doctor a Question
Any Time, Any Where?

Join our FREE Patient Website and securely email your doctor online any time of the day!

- Request or Change Appointments
- Safely Email Your Doctor
- View Lab Results
- Request Prescription Refills
- View Medical Records

Sign Up Today!
For more information ask the front desk or go to www.portalname.com.

Insert logo here

¿Quiere preguntarle a su médico una pregunta en cualquier momento y en cualquier lugar?

Únase gratis a nuestra página web para pacientes (Patient Website) y envíele un correo electrónico a su médico en cualquier momento del día!

- Solicite o cambie citas
- Envíe un correo electrónico seguro a su medico.
- Vea los resultados de laboratorio.
- Solicite relleno de medicamento.
- Vea los expedientes médicos

¡Inscríbase hoy!

Para más información pregunte en recepción o visite el sitio web: www.portalname.com

Insert logo here

Need a Simple Way to Get
Your Lab Results?

Never play phone tag with your doctor again. Connect to our FREE Patient Website and view your lab test results online!

- Request or Change Appointments
- Safely Email Your Doctor
- View Lab Results
- Request Prescription Refills
- View Medical Records

Sign Up Today!

For more information ask the front desk or go to www.portalname.com.

Insert logo here

¿Necesita una manera sencilla de obtener los resultados de laboratorio?

Nunca tendrá que esperar por la llamada de su médico. ¡Ingrese a nuestro sitio web gratis para pacientes y vea los resultados de las pruebas de laboratorio en línea!

- Solicite o cambie citas
- Envíe un correo electrónico seguro a su medico.
- Vea los resultados de laboratorio.
- Solicite relleno de medicamento.
- Vea los expedientes médicos

¡Inscríbase hoy!

Para más información pregunte en recepción o visite el sitio web: www.portalname.com

Insert logo here

Want to Ask Your
Doctor a Question?

Online access to your clinic team – Any time, Any where!

- Request or Change Appointments
- Safely Email Your Doctor
- View Lab Results
- Request Prescription Refills
- View Medical Records

Sign Up Today!
For more information ask the front desk or go towww.portalname.com.

Insert logo here

Post-Launch

Post-launch Checklist

This checklist supplements the information provided in the patient portal training module slides. It gives providers and organizations information on the steps for maintaining a successful patient portal. It also includes information on continuous quality improvement, new feature rollout, and continued support and education.

Resources

Patient Portal Checklist

Step 3: Post-launch
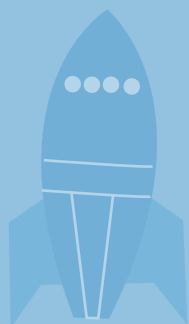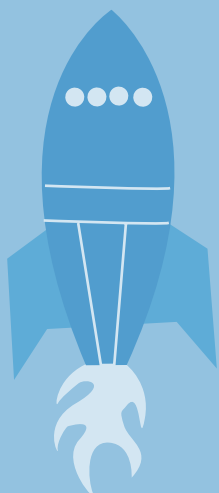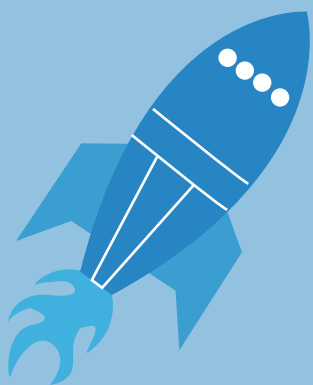
Continuous Quality Improvement

- ☐ Make adjustments and improvements to patient portal based on feedback from health care teams, administrative staff, and patients/families
- ☐ Make adjustments to workflow based on feedback from health care teams and administrative staff
- ☐ Conduct periodic "quality control" checks of secure messages and address any issues (such as provider messages using medical jargon that may be confusing patients)

New Feature Rollout

- ☐ Introduce additional features over time, and identify new features based on input from health care teams, administrative staff, and patients/families
- ☐ Continue promotion to increase awareness of the patient portal, its benefits, and new features

Continued Support and Education

- ☐ Designate staff to provide ongoing support and education to patients registering for the portal for the first time, inactive portal users, and experienced portal users

Post-Launch Patient and Provider Satisfaction Surveys

Patient Satisfaction Survey

This sample survey assesses patient satisfaction with the patient portal.
The survey can be accessed at:
http://www.chcf.org/~/media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/P/PDF%20PatientPortalsPatientSatisfactionSurvey.pdf

[From the California Healthcare Foundation Patient Portal Resource Center]

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Post-Launch Patient and Provider Satisfaction Surveys

Resources

Provider Satisfaction Survey

This sample survey assesses clinician and staff satisfaction with the patient portal.
The survey can be accessed at:
http://www.chcf.org/~/media/MEDIA%20LIBRARY%20Files/PDF/P/PDF%20PatientPortalsStaffSatisfactionSurvey.pdf

[From the California Healthcare Foundation Patient Portal Resource Center]

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

Post-Launch Patient and Provider Satisfaction Surveys

CAHPS Program, Health IT Survey Item Set

This sample survey assesses patient use and the impact of health IT.

[From the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality CAHPS Program]

Resources

The Office of the National Coordinator for
Health Information Technology

About the CAHPS® Health Information Technology Item Set

Introduction

There are many local, regional, and national initiatives to accelerate the adoption of health information technology (health IT). Because of the associated changes in the delivery of care, assessing the use of health IT from the patient's perspective is important.

In the summer of 2011, the CAHPS Consortium finalized a new set of supplemental items for the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey that focus on assessing the use of health IT.

This document discusses—

- Rationale for assessing health IT from the patient's perspective.
- Topics covered by the health IT supplemental item set.
- Selecting health IT items.
- Ways to use the survey results to inform health care consumers and other stakeholders and to improve the quality of care.

Assessing the Use and Impact of Health IT

Health IT is a broad term that captures multiple technologies and functions. Use of health IT varies and can include—

- Providers' use of computers or handheld devices during a patient visit to:
  - access and complete information in an electronic medical record (EMR).
  - access medical information, such as prescribing guidelines.
  - show medical record information to the patient (e.g., x-ray images, growth curves).
  - transmit a prescription medicine.
- Patients' use of the Internet, personal health records (PHRs) or portals to:
  - make appointments.
  - communicate and ask questions via secure messaging.
  - view information from the EMR such as visit notes, prescription lists, laboratory or other test results.
  - request prescription refills.

While the technology has the potential to improve communication and access for patients, some studies have reported negative outcomes, such as depersonalization of the provider visit. Therefore, it is critical to assess the use and impact of health IT from the patient's perspective. The CAHPS Consortium developed items that would assess aspects of the use of health IT for which patients are the best or only source of information.

Contents of the CAHPS Health IT Item Set

The Health IT Item Set consists of 21 supplemental items designed for use with the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey. The items address the following three content areas:

- Provider use of computer or handheld device
- E-mail access and helpfulness
- Helpfulness of health IT

Appendix A provides a list of the items in the Health IT Item Set. Formatted items with response options are also listed in the Supplemental Items for the Adult Clinician & Group Surveys at *Get Clinician & Group Surveys and Instructions*: https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/Surveys-Guidance/CG/Get-CG-Surveys-and-Instructions.aspx; that document also provides instructions for placing each item in the core 12-Month Survey.

To learn more about incorporating supplemental items into a questionnaire, go to **Preparing a Questionnaire Using the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey**: https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/~/media/Files/Surveys-and-Guidance/CGKit/1032_CG_Preparing_a_Questionnaire.pdf.

Selecting Items from the CAHPS Health IT Item Set

The Health IT Item Set was designed to assess a variety of aspects of health IT. Users of the Item Set may select the items that are applicable to the health IT functions they want to assess.

Appendix A lists the category for each item in the Health IT Item Set based on health IT function. Users can select items based on the applicable health IT functions. All items have relevant screening items to determine if the patient has used the specific function.

Users are encouraged to follow the administration guidelines for the Clinician & Group Survey. It is recommended that items be administered to all patients rather than a subset (e.g., only those patient that access a patient portal). To learn more about administering the Clinician & Group Survey, go to **Fielding the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey:** https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/~/media/Files/SurveyDocuments/CG/Admin_Survey/1033_CG_Fielding_the_Survey.pdf.

Using Data From Responses to the CAHPS Health IT Item Set

Organizations that field the CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey may want to use data from these questions to inform consumers, provide feedback to providers, and spur improvements in patients' experiences with care.

Informing Consumers

If you incorporate questions from the Health IT Item Set into the Clinician & Group Survey, you can report results at the level of the medical group, physician practice, or individual clinician. The item set produces four patient experience measures: three composite measures plus one single item about access to appointments.

- Helpfulness of provider's use of computers during a visit (2 items)

  - Provider's use of computer or handheld device was helpful to you.

  - Provider's use of computer or handheld device made it easier for you to talk with him or her.

- Getting timely answers to medical questions by email (2 items)

  - Provider answered your emailed medical question as soon as you needed.

  - Provider answered all of your emailed questions.

- Helpfulness of provider's Web site in giving you information about your care and tests (4 items)

  - Easy-to-find lab or other test results on the Web site.

  - Lab or other test results posted on Web site as soon as you needed them.

  - Lab or other test results presented in way that was easy to understand.

  - Visit notes were easy to understand.

- Getting timely appointments through email or a Web site (1 item)

  - Patient got an appointment using email or Web site as soon as needed.

For information on calculating scores for composite measures, review the analysis instructions in the *CAHPS Clinician & Group Surveys and Instructions*: https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/Surveys-Guidance/CG/Get-CG-Surveys-and-Instructions.aspx.

Providing Feedback

Health care organizations using this item set can use the composite measures for benchmarking and reporting at the group or practice site level. For example, a health system may report the composite measures listed above to compare performance across provider groups, or a provider group may compare performance across practice sites.

At the level of individual providers, health care organizations may want to provide item-level feedback in order to help providers better understand the behaviors and actions that improve the patients' experiences such as:

- Barriers to making appointments using health IT.

- Responsiveness to questions submitted electronically.

- Providers use of computers or handheld devices during the clinical encounter.

- Providing information (test results or visit notes) using health IT.

Improving Quality

This item set is intended to collect data that health care providers can use to improve care by:

- Identifying specific topic areas for quality improvement.

- Recognizing particular behaviors or actions that inhibit the effective use of health IT.

- Measuring the effect of behaviors that promote the effective use of health IT.

Providers can identify their strengths and weaknesses by topic area as well as for individual items by analyzing differences in responses. Responses can also be segmented for further analyses to provide more detailed information. Examples of subgroups of interest include: demographics, level of utilization, length of relationship with provider, etc.

Having identified opportunities for improvement and embarked on quality improvement activities, the providers can then field the items again to evaluate the success of improvement activities.

To learn about quantitative and qualitative analyses useful for identifying improvement opportunities as well as strategies for improving patients' experiences, explore the **CAHPS Improvement Guide** at: https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/Quality-Improvement/Improvement-Guide.aspx.

Development of the CAHPS Health IT Item Set

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) sponsored the development of the Health IT Item Set through the CAHPS Consortium. The development process included the following steps:

- **Stakeholder meetings.** In June 2006, AHRQ hosted a meeting with health IT and CAHPS survey experts as well as stakeholders representing health care organizations and consumers. This group discussed the use of health IT by physician practices, the aspects of patient care likely to be affected by health IT, the areas that consumers would be best suited to comment on, and sources of related information, including potential items.

Learn more: Health IT-CAHPS® Stakeholders Meeting, June 28, 2006: https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/~/media/Files/Survey-and-Guidance/ HIT_CAHPS_Meeting_Summary.

- **Literature review.** The CAHPS team completed a literature review of HIT/provider/patient interactions.

- **Focus groups.** The CAHPS team conducted focus groups with health IT users. The goals of the focus group sessions were to explore:

  o What health care functions are important to patients.
  o How patients view health IT's role in facilitating those functions.
  o What patients believe they are able to report on regarding health IT.
  o What patients regard as the most important roles for health IT in a physician practice.

- **Item inventory.** Based on the stakeholder meeting, literature review, and focus groups, the grantees developed an inventory of items and sorted them into content domains.

- **Site interviews.** The team conducted in-depth interviews with health plan representatives and providers that use health IT. The interviews explored issues around electronic and PHR architecture, functions most frequently used by providers and patients, and percent of patients registered to use PHR systems.

- **Cognitive testing.** Draft items were cognitively tested with consumers to ensure that they can accurately understand and interpret the questions and response options. After two rounds of cognitive testing, the team incorporated the findings into an item set that was used for field testing.

- **Technical expert panel**. Toward the end of item development the team convened a web-based meeting of a technical expert panel of 20 health informatics and policy leaders who provided advice on item set domains and the pilot testing process.

- **Field testing.** The items were tested in three organizations in diverse geographic settings.

- **Psychometric analysis.** Extensive psychometric analyses were conducted to understand how the items functioned in the field test. The results led to the finalization of the Item Set and composite measures.

- **Composite label testing.** The composite measure labels were tested with consumers to ensure that the labels were understood as intended by consumers.

The CAHPS Consortium would like to acknowledge in particular the following organizations for their support of the development of this item set: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Group Health Cooperative, and Kaiser Permanente Southern California.

Related Resources

- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality:
  http://healthit.ahrq.gov/portal/server.pt/community/ahrq_national_resource_center_for_health_it/650

Appendix A. Items in the Health IT Item Set

The formatted supplemental items, complete with instructions on how to integrate them into the full CAHPS Clinician & Group Survey, are available in the Supplemental Items for the Adult Clinician & Group Surveys at ***Get Clinician & Group Surveys and Instructions***:
https://www.cahps.ahrq.gov/Surveys-Guidance/CG/Get-CG-Surveys-and-Instructions.aspx.

The specific health IT function that is assessed in each item is indicated in the table, which can be used to determine the appropriate items to use. For example, if a practice communicates via email with patients but does not have a Web site or patient portal and providers do not use computers or handheld devices during patient visits then the items indicated in the "E-mail" column are appropriate to use.

Item	Item text	Email	Patient Web site	Provider Use of Computer
HIT1.	Can you make appointments at this provider's office by email or on a Web site?	x	x	
HIT2.	In the last 12 months, did you use email or a Web site to make an appointment at this provider's office?	x	x	
HIT3.	In the last 12 months, when you used email or a Web site to get an appointment at this provider's office, how often did you get an appointment as soon as you needed?	x	x	
HIT4.	In the last 12 months, did you email this provider's office with a medical question?	x		
HIT5.	In the last 12 months, when you emailed this provider's office, how often did you get an answer to your medical question as soon as you needed?	x		
HIT6.	In the last 12 months, when you emailed this provider's office, how often were all of the questions in your email answered?	x		
HIT7.	Providers may use computers or handheld devices during an office visit to do things like look up your information or order prescription medicines. In the last 12 months, did this provider use a computer or handheld device during any of your visits?			x
HIT8.	During your visits in the last 12 months, did this provider ever use a computer or handheld device to look up test results or other information about you?(Q39)			x

Item	Item text	Email	Patient Web site	Provider Use of Computer
HIT9.	During your visits in the last 12 months, did this provider ever use a computer or handheld device to show you information?			x
HIT10.	In the last 12 months, did this provider ever use a computer or a handheld device to order your prescription medicines?			x
HIT11.	During your visits in the last 12 months, was this provider's use of a computer or handheld device helpful to you?			x
HIT12.	During your visits in the last 12 months, did this provider's use of a computer or handheld device make it harder or easier for you to talk with him or her?			x
HIT13.	Does this provider's office put your laboratory or other test results on a Web site for you to see?		x	
HIT14.	In the last 12 months did you look for your lab or other test results on the Web site?		x	
HIT15.	In the last 12 months, how often was it easy to find these lab or other test results on the Web site?		x	
HIT16.	In the last 12 months, how often were these lab or other test results put on the Web site as soon as you needed them?		x	
HIT17.	In the last 12 months, how often were these lab or other test results presented in a way that was easy to understand?		x	
HIT18.	Visit notes sum up what was talked about on a visit to a provider's office. Visit notes may be available on paper, on a Web site or by email. In the last 12 months, did this provider's office offer you visit notes?	x	x	x
HIT19.	In the last 12 months, how did this provider's office offer you the visit notes? Mark one or more.	x	x	x
HIT20.	In the last 12 months, did you look at any visit notes from this provider's office?	x	x	x
HIT21.	In the last 12 months, how often were the visit notes easy to understand?	x	x	x

Training Module:
Using Patient Portals to
Enhance Patient and
Family Engagement