

# KY REC Tip for the Kentucky Medicaid EHR Incentive Program (Promoting Interoperability)

## Patient Electronic Access

### What does Stage 3 require for Patient Electronic Access?

The eligible professional (EP) provides patients (or patient-authorized representative) with timely electronic access to their health information and patient-specific education.

An EP must satisfy both measures for this objective through a combination of meeting the thresholds and exclusions:

- **Measure 1:** For **more than 80%** of all unique patients seen by the EP: (1) The patient (or the patient-authorized representative) is provided timely access to view online, download, and transmit his or her health information; and (2) The provider ensures the patient's health information is available for the patient (or patient-authorized representative) to access using any application of their choice that is configured to meet the technical specifications of the Application Programming Interface (API) in the provider's certified electronic health record technology (CEHRT).
- **Measure 2:** The EP must use clinically relevant information from CEHRT to identify patient-specific educational resources and provide electronic access to those materials to **more than 35%** of unique patients seen by the EP during the EHR reporting period.

### Exclusions:

- **Measure 1 & 2:** An EP may take an exclusion for either measure if he or she has no office visits during the EHR reporting period.



### Definition of Terms:

- API: A set of programming protocols established for multiple purposes. APIs may be enabled by a provider or provider organization to provide the patient with access to their health information through a third-party application with more flexibility than is often found in many current “patient portals.”
- Provide Access: When a patient possesses all of the necessary information needed to view, download, or transmit their information. This could include providing patients with instructions on how to access their health information, the website address they must visit for online access, a unique and registered username or password, instructions on how to create a login, or any other instructions, tools, or materials that patients need in order to view, download, or transmit their information.

### Additional Information:

- For Measure 1, EPs must offer all four functionalities (view, download, transmit, and access through API) to their patients, and PHI needs to be made available to each patient for view, download, and transmit **within 48 hours** of the information being available to the EP for each and every time that information is generated, regardless of how long the patient has been "enrolled."
- For Measure 1, if a patient elects to “opt out” of participation, an EP may count that patient in the numerator if the patient is provided all of the necessary information to subsequently access their information, obtain access through a patient-authorized representative, or otherwise opt-back-in without further follow up action required by the EP.
- Paper-based actions are no longer allowed or required to be counted for Measure 2 calculations. EPs may still provide paper based educational materials for their patients, but they may no longer be included in measure calculations.
- The patient must be able to access this information on demand, such as through a patient portal, a personal health record (PHR) or by other online electronic means. Reference the KY REC Patient Education tip sheet for more information on other electronic means.

### Best Practices:

- Ensure that your API functionality is fully enabled by contacting your vendor.
- Provide patients with detailed instructions on how to authenticate their access through the API and provide the patient with supplemental information on available applications that leverage the API.
- Contact vendor to be trained on how to send patient education to a patient portal account. Then train staff on new workflow.
- Receive proper training from the vendor on how to use the patient portal and how to send over necessary patient information to the patient portal. Determine if information will be automatically sent to the portal or if you will need to manually push the information over to the portal.
- Encounters must be signed by the provider within 48 hours to send to the patient portal.
- Determine how you will invite patients onto your patient portal. Collect email addresses from all patients seen by the EP.

- If a patient opts out of participating with the patient portal, have a written policy in place of what documents are provided to the patient and keep examples in your binder. Some vendors have a place to mark those patients in your system to count and others do not. If not, you will have the option to keep a manual log sheet to count those that have opted out and that have received the necessary information to subsequently access their information, obtain access through a patient-authorized representative, or otherwise opt back in without further follow up action required by the provider. If you keep a log sheet of those patients, it is important to be able to pull the totals for the exact 90-day reporting period and for each provider separately. Each patient must only count once per reporting period regardless of how many times they have been seen during that 90 days.
- Train staff and providers on how to educate patients throughout their visit regarding how to sign up and use the various features within the patient portal. The more they are reminded and shown how to use the features, the more likely they will use it.
- Implement a workflow to view patient portal requests throughout the day. Also, make patients aware that you will be viewing messages/requests timely.
- Some practices have a designated person that educates the patient as they arrive on how to sign up for the portal, how to view the patient portal, and how to use the features available. While this does take more time, the practices are finding a larger number of patients utilizing the portal, therefore, having higher percentages for this measure.

CMS EP Specification Sheet – Patient Electronic Access:

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/medicaid-ep-2020-patient-electronic-access-objective-5.pdf>