Secure Electronic Messaging

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How does CMS define this measure?

For an EHR reporting period in 2017, for more than 5% of patients seen by the EP during the EHR reporting period, a secure message was sent using the electronic messaging function of CEHRT to the patient (or the patient-authorized representative), or in response to a secure message sent by the patient (or the patient-authorized representative) during the reporting year.

For more details and CMS term definitions click here.

How is the measure calculated?

Calculation	CMS Attestation Requirement	athenahealth's Implementation of CMS Requirement
Numerator	The number of patients in the denominator for whom a secure electronic message is sent to the patient (or patient-authorized representative), or in response to a secure message sent by the patient (or patient-authorized representative).	Measure is satisfied if any of the following actions are take • Any practice user sends patient case to patient's porta • Lab Results pushed to patient's portal • Health Awareness Campaign is sent to patient's portal
Denominator	Number of unique patients seen by the EP during the EHR reporting period.	

- Practice users can only send a secure message to a patient (or patient-authorized representative) who is registered for the portal.
- "Halo Effect": When a secure message is sent to a patient, that patient can be counted in the numerator for any of the EPs at the group practice who use the same CEHRT and also saw the patient during their EHR reporting period.

Are there any CMS exclusions or alternate exclusions/specifications for this measure?

- A provider may be excluded if he or she has no office visits during the EHR reporting period.
- A provider may be excluded if he or she conducts 50% or more of his or her patient encounters in a county that does not have 50% or more of its housing units with 4Mbps broadband availability according to the latest information available from the FCC on the first day of the EHR reporting period. Please follow these steps to determine if you qualify for this exclusion. If you do qualify, contact the CSC to request that the exclusion be applied.

How is this measure satisfied?

Video Demonstration (Streamlined):

Step-by-Step Instructions:

Practice users can send a secure electronic message to a patient by following the instructions below:

1. Create a patient case

   Classic: On the Facesheet or Minichart, click new patient case at the top of the page.

   Streamlined: From the patient chart, click the Actions menu icon at the upper right, and select Create Patient Case.

2. Select Source/Recipient: "Patient Portal"

Note: If the patient has not registered for the portal, "Patient Portal" will not be available in the dropdown

3. Select your name in the "Provider" field
4. Enter your message in the "Case Description" field
5. Click Save

athenaNet sends your message to the patient's portal and assigns it to Portal in the Clinical Inbox.

You'll know when the patient retrieves the message, because athenaNet changes the status to CLOSED.

Practice users can reply to a secure electronic message from a patient by following the instructions below:

1. Display the Clinical Inbox. Secure messages from patients arrive in the form of a Patient Case in the Clinical Inbox.

2. Click the number link in the Patient Cases column.

3. Click the case to display it in the center pane in update mode. Note that the Source/Recipient is "Patient Portal."

4. Select "Reply to patient via Portal." This action ensures that your response will be sent as a message on the Patient Portal.

5. Enter the text of your response in the Action Note field.

6. Click Save to send your secure message.

Why am I failing this measure?

Common failure reason	Recommendation
Patient was not sent any of the following to the portal: a secure message, lab results, or a Health Awareness Campaign.	To send a secure message, create a new patient case and select 'Patient Portal' as the Source/Recipient. Enter your message in the 'Case Description' field and click 'Save' to send.
A secure message was sent to a patient not seen during the reporting period.	To satisfy the measure, a secure message must be sent to a patient who: • has had an encounter with the provider during their reporting period, and • is registered for the portal, and • is not blocked from the portal.

Anything else I should know?

- Hospital-based services (Place of Service codes 21 and 23) are not included in the denominator.