

Eligible Professional EHR Incentive Program Objectives and Measures for 2015 Objective 9 of 10

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Secure Electronic Messaging	
Objective	Use secure electronic messaging to communicate with patients on relevant health information.
Measures	For an EHR reporting period in 2015, the capability for patients to send and receive a secure electronic message with the EP was fully enabled during the EHR reporting period.
Exclusion	Any EP who has no office visits during the EHR reporting period; or any EP who conducts 50 percent or more of his or her patient encounters in a county that does not have 50 percent 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.
Alternate Exclusion	An EP may claim an exclusion for the measure if for an EHR reporting period in 2015 they were scheduled to demonstrate Stage 1, which does not have an equivalent measure.

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Definitions of Terms

Secure Message – Any electronic communication between a provider and patient that ensures only those parties can access the communication. This electronic message could be email or the electronic messaging function of a PHR, an online patient portal, or any other electronic means.

Fully Enabled - The function is fully installed, any security measures are fully enabled, and the function is readily available for patient use.

Attestation Requirements

YES/NO/EXCLUSION/ALTERNATE EXCLUSION

- YES/NO for 2015: For an EHR reporting period in 2015, EPs must attest YES to the capability for patients to send and receive a secure electronic message with the EP was fully enabled during the EHR reporting period.
- EXCLUSION: Any EP who has no office visits during the EHR reporting period; or any EP who conducts 50 percent or more of his or her patient encounters in a county that does not have 50 percent 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.



- ALTERNATE EXCLUSION: An EP may claim an exclusion for the measure if for an EHR reporting period in 2015 they were scheduled to demonstrate Stage 1, which does not have an equivalent measure.

Additional Information

- The thresholds for this measure increase over time between 2015 through 2017 to allow providers to work incrementally toward a high goal. This is consistent with our past policy in the program to establish incremental change from basic to advanced use and increased thresholds over time. The measure thresholds for this objective are “fully enabled” for 2015, at least one patient for 2016, and a threshold of 5 percent for 2017 to build toward the Stage 3 threshold.
- Fully implemented means that during the EHR reporting period the provider enables the function. We recognize that changes to the function may be required to accommodate changes to the measure so do not expect that the provider would have the function enabled for the entire duration of the reporting period for 2015 only.
- Provider initiated action and interactions with a patient-authorized representative, are acceptable for the measure and are included in the numerator.
- A patient-initiated message would only count toward the numerator if the provider responds to the patient. Note: This measurement would not be required until 2016 and then at a level of only 1 patient.
- The action for the numerator must occur within the calendar year but may occur before, during, or after the EHR reporting period if that period is less than one full calendar year.

Regulatory References

- This objective may be found in Section 42 of the code of the federal register at 495.22 (e)(9)(i). For further discussion please see [80 FR 62816](#).
- In order to meet this objective and measure, an EP must use the capabilities and standards of CEHRT at 45 CFR 170.314(e)(3).

Certification and Standards Criteria

Below is the corresponding certification and standards criteria for electronic health record technology that supports achieving the meaningful use of this objective.

Certification Criteria*	
§ 170.314(e)(3) Secure messaging	Enable a user to electronically send messages to, and receive messages from, a patient in a manner that ensures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Both the patient (or authorized representative) and EHR technology user are authenticated; and (ii) The message content is encrypted and integrity-protected in accordance with the standard for encryption and hashing algorithms specified at § 170.210(f).

**Depending on the type of certification issued to the EHR technology, it will also have been certified to the certification criterion adopted at 45 CFR 170.314 (g)(1), (g)(2), or both, in order to assist in the calculation of this meaningful use measure.*

Standards Criteria

**§ 170.210(f)
Encryption and
hashing of
electronic
health
information**

Any encryption and hashing algorithm identified by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as an approved security function in Annex A of the FIPS Publication 140-2 (incorporated by reference in § 170.299.)