

# Eligible Professional Medicaid EHR Incentive Program Modified Stage 2 Objectives and Measures for 2017 Objective 9 of 10

Updated: November 2016

Secure Electronic Messaging	
<b>Objective</b>	Use secure electronic messaging to communicate with patients on relevant health information.
<b>Measures</b>	For an EHR reporting period in 2017, for more than 5 percent of unique 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 EHR reporting period.
<b>Exclusion(s)</b>	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.

## Table of Contents

- Definitions of Terms
- Attestation Requirements
- Additional Information
- Regulatory References
- Certification and Standards Criteria

## 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

- **DENOMINATOR:** Number of unique patients seen by the EP during the EHR reporting period.
- **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).
- **THRESHOLD:** The resulting percentage must be more than 5 percent in order for an EP to meet this measure.



- **EXCLUSIONS:** 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.

### Additional Information

- The thresholds for this measure have increased over time 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 threshold for this objective was “fully enabled” for 2015, was at least one patient for 2016, and is 5 percent for 2017 to build toward the Stage 3 threshold.
- 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.
- The patient action may occur before, during, or after the EHR reporting period. However, in order to count in the numerator, it must occur within the EHR reporting period if that period is a full calendar year, or if it is less than a full calendar year, within the calendar year in which the EHR reporting period occurs.

### Regulatory References

- This objective may be found in Section 42 of the code of the federal register at 495.22 (e)(9)(i) and (ii). 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*	
<b>§ 170.314(e)(3) Secure messaging</b>	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"> <li>(i) Both the patient (or authorized representative) and EHR technology user are authenticated; and</li> <li>(ii) The message content is encrypted and integrity-protected in accordance with the standard for encryption and hashing algorithms specified at § 170.210(f).</li> </ul>

*\*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.)