PCLI FOR OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS

Direct Messaging FAQs

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Answers to the questions doctors ask most about sending and receiving patient information with PCLI by Direct Messaging.

THE BASICS

What is Direct Messaging?

Direct Messaging is an internet-based tool that can replace mail and fax transmissions of patient data with secure and efficient information exchange. It is a standardized, national communication system that allows doctors and healthcare providers located anywhere to quickly send protected health information (PHI) to other trusted parties across different electronic health record (EHR) networks. Each EHR system may have its own name for its Direct Messaging software, but Direct is the name of the standardized, nationwide healthcare messaging highway.

What is the difference between Direct Messaging and encrypted email?

With encrypted email, you must verify your identity and step through certain processes to access email messages. With Direct Messaging, these processes are handled for you. Also, when protected health information (PHI) is shared via Direct Messaging, it can be imported into the EHR with just a few clicks.

Who else uses Direct Messaging?

Hospitals · Providers and clinicians · Care team members · Patients · Laboratories · Pharmacies · Long-term care · Skilled nursing · Specialists

GETTING SET UP

How do I access Direct Messages?

Contact your EHR vendor. Each EHR system receives and handles Direct Messages differently.

What if I don't use the same EHR system as PCLI?

That is not a problem. Direct is a standardized national protocol that allows all EHR systems to exchange protected health information (PHI).

Can I use my normal email account to send or receive Direct Messages?

No. Standard email (Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook, etc.) does not meet the requirements for secure messaging.

What if I have my own email server?

At this time, email servers do not support protocols that meet the requirements for Direct Messaging.

What if I don't have an EHR system?

That is not a problem. PCLI will continue to support mail and fax communication. Doctors without an EHR system also have the option of using third-party, web-based portals that provide Direct Messaging mailboxes. These let doctors without EHR systems access and exchange Direct Messages and view summary or continuity of care documents shared by other providers.

WHY USE IT

Do I benefit from sending referrals via Direct Messaging?

Yes. Information entered into our EHR will be transmitted back to you for your EHR. This saves you time, as our documents can become part of your EHR without printing and scanning.

Does it benefit PCLI when I send referrals via Direct Messaging?

Yes. We are able to transfer details from your EHR into ours with a few clicks. This saves our doctors' and technicians' time in front of the computer and lets them focus more attention on your patient.

IMAGES

Can Direct Messaging be used to share images?

Yes, as long as your EHR system can send and receive images. PCLI's EHR system has these abilities.

In what format are images transmitted?

At PCLI, our Direct Messaging software converts images to PDF files before they are sent to providers.

STANDARDS & ACCREDITATION

What is a HISP?

HISP stands for Health Information Service Provider. A HISP is similar to an internet service provider (like Comcast or Verizon) that connects you to the internet and often provides an email address. In the same way, a HISP provides access to Direct Messaging and gives you a Direct address.

Is PCLI's HISP accredited with DirectTrust?

Yes. Our HISP is NextGen Share and has achieved full accreditation with the Direct Trusted Agent Accreditation Program (DTAAP) from DirectTrust.org, and the Electronic Healthcare Network Accreditation Commission (EHNAC). This accreditation confirms compliance with industry-established standards for security and trust and with healthcare regulatory measures.

What is a CCD and C-CDA?

CCD stands for Continuity of Care Document. This type of file is part of every Direct Message containing patient health data. CCDs are designed for easy integration into any EHR system. C-CDA stands for Consolidated Clinical Document Architecture. It sets a standard for creating electronic clinical documents (like CCDs) so protected health information (PHI) can be shared between EHR systems.

Is Direct Messaging required for Meaningful Use Stage 1?

No. But, if desired, the summary of care document can be transmitted with Direct Messaging.

Is Direct Messaging required for Meaningful Use Stage 2?

Some sort of secure messaging is required for Meaningful Use Stage 2. At this time, Direct Messaging is the most widely accepted and easily supported option.