Modified Stage 2 Objective 9: Secure Electronic Messaging

**Objective:** Use secure electronic messaging to communicate with patients on relevant health information.

**Measure for an EHR reporting period in 2017:** More than 5 percent of unique patients seen by the EP during 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 during the EHR reporting period.

**Exclusions:** Any EP who
A. Has no office visits during the EHR reporting period, or
B. 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 their EHR reporting period. *Not valid in Tennessee.*

**CMS Specification Sheet**

**TennCare Notes** - This objective and measure does not align with anything in Stage 1 Meaningful Use. This measure, like other Stage 2 measures, actively involves patients in using health information technology.

Beginning in 2016, all EPs must attest to this measure to successfully demonstrate meaningful use.

For EPs, secure messaging is critically important to two National Quality Strategy priorities:

- Ensuring that each person/family is engaged as partners in their care;
- Promoting effective communication and coordination of care

Secure messaging could make care more affordable by using more efficient communication vehicles when appropriate. Specifically, research demonstrates that secure messaging has improved patient adherence to treatment plans, which reduces readmission rates. In addition, secure messaging has led to increased patient
satisfaction with their care and is one of the top ranked features according to patients. Despite some trepidation, providers have seen a reduction in time responding to inquiries and time spent on the phone.¹

**Relevant CMS FAQs**

Look up the following CMS FAQs on this [spreadsheet](#).

- 12825: Practice with same CEHRT
- 8231: Activity outside reporting period

**Additional Resources:**

**Broadband Map**

**Related Articles**

