

**How Patient Portals Create Value for Patients –**

**and Fulfill Meaningful Use Requirements**

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Below is an excerpt of the white paper. To download the complete content, please visit [www.intuithealth.com/aafp](http://www.intuithealth.com/aafp).

**Patient Portals: Background**

A patient portal looks much like a Web site, but the similarities end there. A Web site offers a static user experience while a Web-based patient portal is a gateway into a medical practice for patients. A portal provides a secure, HIPAA-compliant, two-way communication channel between patients and their health care providers.

Unlike your practice’s office operations, the portal provides convenient, 24-hour, self-service options. It allows patients to handle business and clinical interactions with your practice at their convenience, and allows your staff to respond when it suits them.

While the features of portals may vary, the options typically allow patients to complete, manage or communicate with their provider regarding:

* Registration

94% of consumers rated easy access to their own medical records as *important* or *very important*.

75% of patients want their physicians to provide online services to schedule appointments, get test results, access medical records and exchange email.

* Financial clearance
* Medical history
* Appointment scheduling requests and confirmations
* Appointment recalls for preventive and other recommended care
* Specialty referrals
* Test results notification and tracking
* Patient-health care provider communication
* Online bill payment
* Prescription renewal

**Meaningful Use and Patient Engagement**

Recognizing the intrinsic values of a well-designed, multi-functional patient portal, the federal government has honed in on portals in its Meaningful Use rules. Twenty of the 25 criteria are required by eligible professionals in order to demonstrate Meaningful Use of their EHR in Stage 1. Four of the 25 criteria, of which 20 are required by eligible professionals in order to demonstrate meaningful use of their EHR in Stage 1, focus on services that practices would be hard-pressed to provide without a patient portal.

***Patient Engagement Criteria One: Electronic copy of health information***

*Measure: More than 50% of all patients of the eligible professional (EP) who request an electronic copy of their health information are provided it within 3 business days*

***Clinical summaries***

*Measure: Clinical summaries are provided to patients for more than 50% of all office visits within 3 business days*

***Appointment recalls***

*Measure: More than 20% of all unique patients 65 years old or older or 5 years old or younger are sent an appropriate reminder during the EHR reporting period*

***Timely access to health information***

*Measure: More than 10% of all unique patients seen by the EP are provided timely (available to the patient within four business days of being updated in the certified EHR technology) electronic access to their health information subject to the EP's discretion to withhold certain information*

Source: 42 CFR Parts 412, 413, 422 et al. Medicare and Medicaid Programs; Electronic Health Record Incentive Program; Final Rule. Accessed September 21, 2010: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-17207.pdf>