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To: Physicians and Advanced Practice Clinicians Caring for Sutter Patients

Subject: OpenNotes and Results Release

Earlier this year, the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology announced the final rule of the 2016 Cures Act. The new federal regulations are designed to acknowledge the important role patients play on their care teams, and to promote patient-centered care. For this reason and to comply with the new regulation, Sutter Health will implement changes to support patient access to their electronic health information, including clinical notes and results.

We recognize this may represent a big change for some clinicians so a Sutter-wide project team has developed an OpenNotes and Results Release resource site ** that includes tools to help clinician leaders and front-line clinicians prepare for this change, which takes effect Oct. 29. The tools include an FAQ and details on how you may ask additional questions during live Provider Q&A Zoom meetings. We encourage you to attend one or more of the sessions to learn more about the upcoming federal regulations.

The primary ways you as clinicians will be affected are:

- Your notes will be visible to patients when the encounter is closed and
- Test results will be released more quickly to patients.

Patients have long had the right to access their health information through requests to Health Information Management (HIM). What changes Oct. 29 is something often referred to as anti-information blocking and means that clinical notes and test results will be released electronically through My Health Online (MHO), the Sutter patient portal.

This more timely way of communicating with patients includes all electronic health information pertaining to patient medications, allergies, demographics, care team members, eight types of clinical notes, assessment and plan of treatment, vital signs and lab results. These designated pieces of information make up what is known as the U.S. Core Data for Interoperability (USCDI). This new regulation is pertinent to all care settings—including ambulatory, acute care, home health and other settings. For more information about the USCDI and release of information, click here.

Clinicians will have few exceptions that will allow the blocking of notes and test results. Tip sheets that will be available soon at this resource site will help you navigate through what notes and results are still appropriate to block.

As a part of this new regulation, on Oct. 29 patients will have electronic access to all historical notes in their medical records, some of which date back several years. All providers will be able

to manually block notes that meet legally defined exceptions before then. It's important to point out that behavioral health progress notes dated prior to Oct. 29 will not be automatically released to MHO. Any behavioral health notes written after Oct. 29 will be shared automatically to MHO unless the provider blocks the note due to an allowable exception. We answer many of your anticipated questions around historical notes in the FAQ so be sure to visit the resource site.

Over the last several years, many Sutter clinicians have become familiar with OpenNotes, an international health information transparency movement that began in 2010. While most of our experience with OpenNotes has been in the ambulatory setting, the ONC federal mandate affects acute care, as well. In sharing progress notes with patients via MHO, clinicians have reported a largely positive experience as fuller transparency has built stronger relationships between patients and care teams, encouraging patients to engage more in their healthcare.

In separate OpenNotes studies:

- 77-87% of patients said accessing their notes made them feel more in control of their healthcare
- Up to 78% of patients reported access to notes helped them take their medications as prescribed

Patients are at the center of all we do at Sutter Health. In addition to patients engaging more in their healthcare, we believe that greater transparency will improve overall quality and safety for Sutter patients and mark another step on our journey to becoming a high reliability organization.

More information is available at www.opennotes.org. Please feel free to reach out to your local clinician leaders or email us at clinicians@sutterhealth.org if you still have questions after reading the educational materials provided on the resource site.

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