

Electronic Release of Results to Patients

Oct. 23, 2020

Know

Earlier this year, the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology announced the [final rule](#) of the 21st Century Cures Act. As part of the new federal regulation that recognizes the important role patients play on their care teams, healthcare professionals are required to electronically release most test results to patients.

Clinical test and imaging results, whether normal or abnormal, will be immediately visible to the patient in My Health Online (MHO) once resulted in the Sutter EHR unless:

1. Their immediate release is prohibited by law*
2. A provider uses an [allowable exception](#) to prevent a result from releasing at the time of placing an order

A provider may also manually unrelease a result in response to a patient request.

*Specific results are protected from automatic electronic release per California law until a healthcare professional has spoken to the patient about the results. Historically these results were blocked from release to MHO. Now, clinicians may manually release these results after communication with the patient, and if the patient requests to view them in MHO:

- i. HIV antibody results
- ii. Positive hepatitis antigen results
- iii. Positive drugs of abuse screen
- iv. Pathology or cytology results (while the law states we are only required to protect results that demonstrate a malignancy, these are not differentiated in the Sutter EHR so all pathology/cytology results will not be immediately shared and can only be manually released by a provider).

For ambulatory providers who use the 'Done' button to remove messages from their inbaskets in the Sutter EHR, this button will no longer also release a result in MHO as of 10/29. This is because most results will be auto-released to MHO and the results not immediately released require a discussion with the patient.

Do

1. Become familiar with the [exceptions](#) for result release, as defined by the [final rule](#) of the Cures Act.
2. Learn how to manually release and unrelease results to MHO, as appropriate.
 - These workflows can be found in the following Sutter Health Wiki sites:
 - i. [Inpatient Results Release Activity Workflow](#)
 - ii. [Ambulatory Results Release Activity Workflow](#)
 - iii. [ED Results Release Activity Workflow](#)
 - iv. [Anesthesiologists, CRNA, SRNA Results Release Activity Workflow](#)

3. Understand the new ambulatory inbasket workflows and use of the 'Done' button (found in Wiki article for [Ambulatory Results Release](#))
4. Learn how to prevent a result from being released to a patient in MHO at the time of placing an order. (Functionality coming soon as part of the Nov. 8 Epic upgrade. Wiki information will be provided once available.)

Share

Share this widely with all providers and care teams who place orders within the Sutter EHR and are responsible for communicating results with patients. [An FAQ](#) is available to answer your questions about OpenNotes and Results Release readiness. If you have additional questions, please email our project team at clinicians@sutterhealth.org and we'll respond as quickly as possible.