

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso HIPAA Privacy Policy

Policy: HPP 4.3	Effective Date: May 18, 2016
Release of Protected Health Information by Email	Last Revision Date: March 19, 2024
References: https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/index.html	

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) to ensure the confidentiality of protected health information (PHI) released by email. This policy defines the minimum guidelines and procedures individuals must follow when transmitting patient information via email. Unless otherwise allowed by federal or state law, TTUHSC El Paso shall only email PHI as outlined in this policy.

Scope

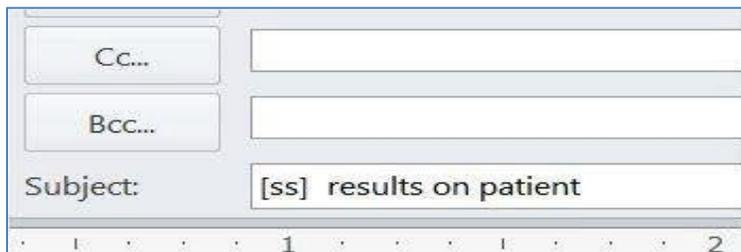
This policy applies to all PHI maintained by TTUHSC El Paso.

Policy

PHI is allowed in internal messages without encryption, i.e., the email must go to another ttuhsc.edu email address.

Transmission of PHI to external parties, i.e., any email address other than ttuhsc.edu or ttu.edu, must be manually encrypted. This includes emails to patients, providers, hospitals, payors, etc.

How to manually encrypt email: Type **[send secure]** or **[ss]** in the subject line right before the subject of the email, as shown below.

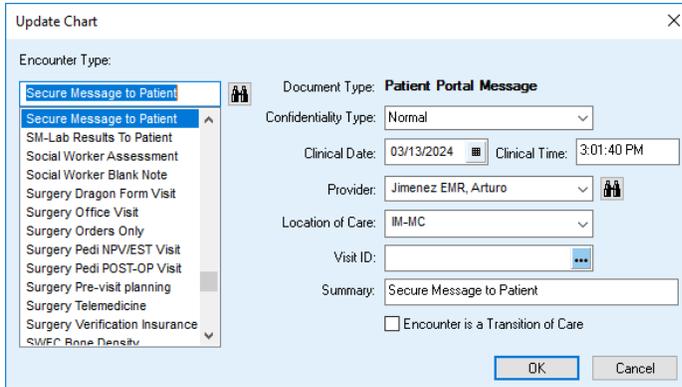


The screenshot shows an email composition window with three fields: 'Cc...', 'Bcc...', and 'Subject:'. The 'Subject:' field contains the text '[ss] results on patient'. Below the fields is a navigation bar with page numbers 1 and 2.

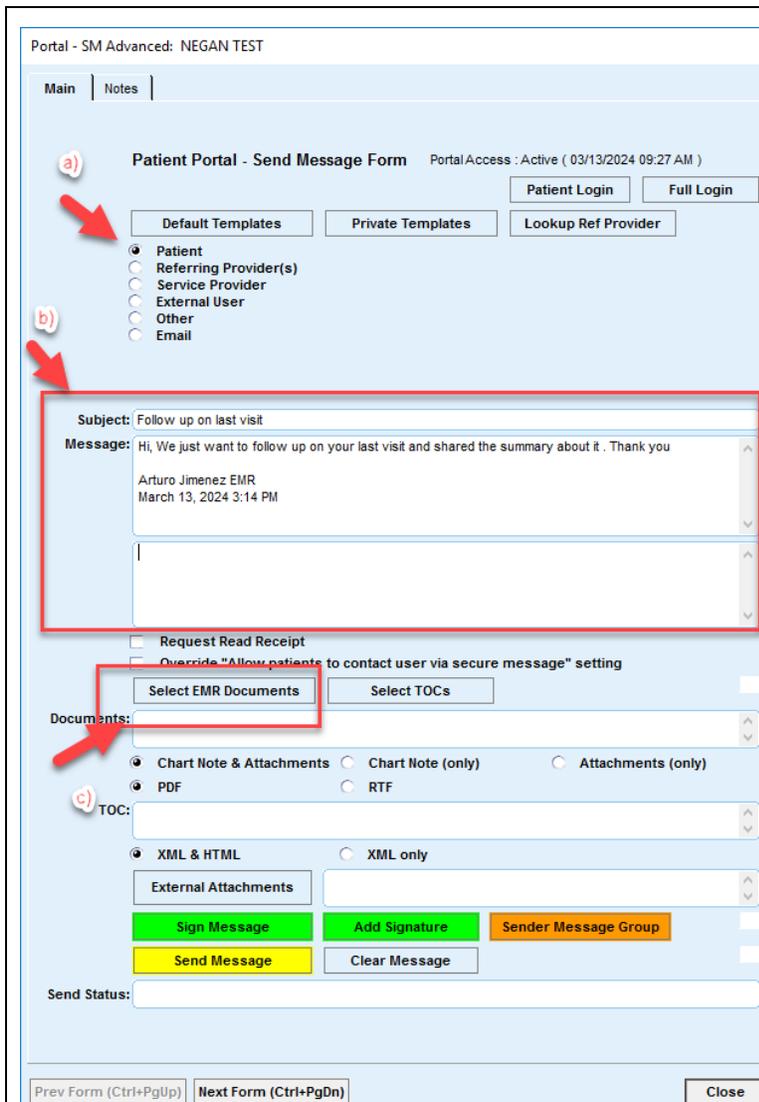
Transmission of PHI through EMR: The user may send secure messages via AthenaFlow EMR, which is the preferred method for sending PHI. The steps are outlined below.

1. Within the patient chart, select the Update button on the patient chart
2. Find and select “Secure Message to Patient” as an encounter

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3. The SM Advanced form generates – each section is identified with a corresponding letter.

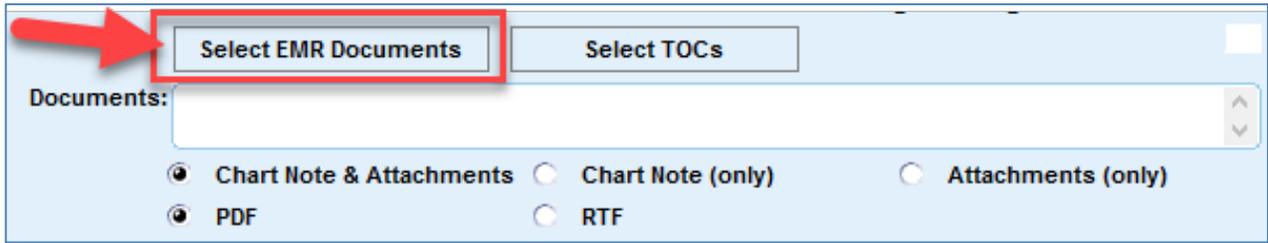


The provider/staff would complete the form as follows:

- a) Recipient. The clinical team selects the patient as the recipient.
- b) Subject and Body of the message.
- c) Attachments that may be added to the message.

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To attach clinical documents to the message, choose the Select EMR Documents button.



Documents:

Chart Note & Attachments Chart Note (only) Attachments (only)
 PDF RTF

Based on the Document ID in EMR, select the corresponding Document ID from the Patient Attachments box. Then click “Select and Close.”

Document View: All

	Date
0	03/12/2024 3:45 PM
	02/21/2024 9:37 AM
	02/16/2024 11:19 AM
	12/07/2023 11:59 PM
	12/06/2023 11:59 PM
	11/28/2023 2:47 PM
	11/28/2023 2:03 PM

Doc ID: 52 Properties: Office Visit at IM-FAC on 03/12/2024 3:45 PM

Current Problems:
 BACK PAIN (ICD-724.5) (ICD10-M54.9)
 LOWER ABDOMINAL PAIN, UNSPECIFIED (ICD10-R10.31)
 CONSTIPATION, OTHER SPECIFIED (ICD-564.09) (ICD10-K59.09)
 OVERACTIVE BLADDER (ICD-596.51) (ICD10-N32.81)
 URINARY BLADDER STONE (ICD-594.1) (ICD10-N21.0)
 UTI URINARY TRACT INFECTION (ICD-599.0) (ICD10-N39.0)

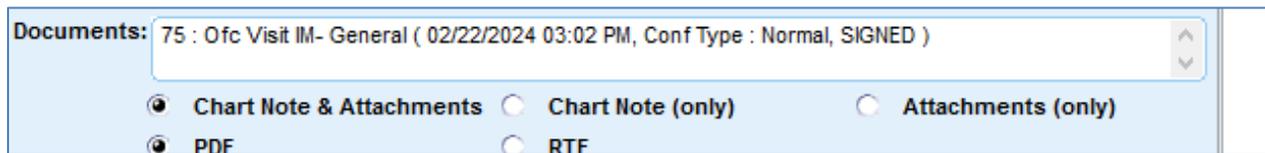
Patient Attachments

Document Type	Document Location	Document Status	Document Confidentiality Type
--SELECT ALL--	--SELECT ALL--	--SELECT ALL--	--SELECT ALL--
Show Documents w/ External Attachments			
NEGAN TEST (828412-2826001)			
Select All Clear All			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	PP Test Subject title goes here one (03/01/2024 12:03 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED) *		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Append IM-General (02/22/2024 03:02 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Ofc Visit IM- General (02/22/2024 03:02 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phone (02/22/2024 03:02 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	PP Test Subject title goes here one (01/22/2024 11:01 AM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Reg Updt Patient Portal Reg (01/17/2024 09:01 AM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consents EP 6.15.B Consent to Treat 7-2016 (2).pdf (11/22/2023 07:11 AM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED) *		
<input type="checkbox"/>	RMS Referral 745829 cancelled, To : Psychiatry , Reason: No appoint (11/21/2023 05:11 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED) *		
<input type="checkbox"/>	OrderOnly Orders Only (11/21/2023 05:11 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)		

Select and Close | Close

1 document selected

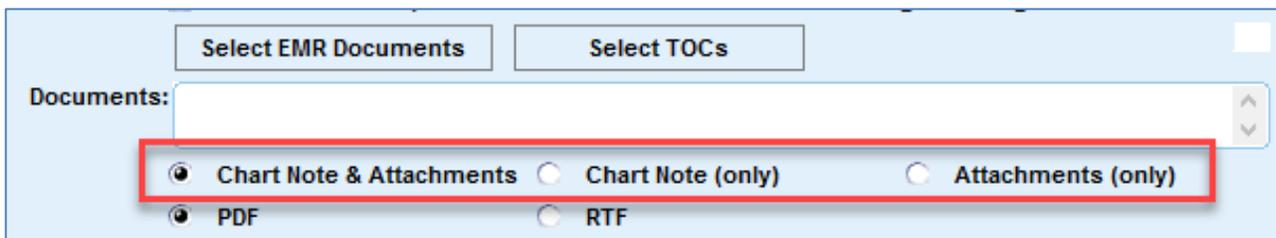
The selected document will then show in the documents area within the form.



Documents: 75 : Ofc Visit IM- General (02/22/2024 03:02 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)

Chart Note & Attachments Chart Note (only) Attachments (only)
 PDF RTF

The sender may elect to send the Chart Note & Attachments, Chart Note (only), or Attachments (only).

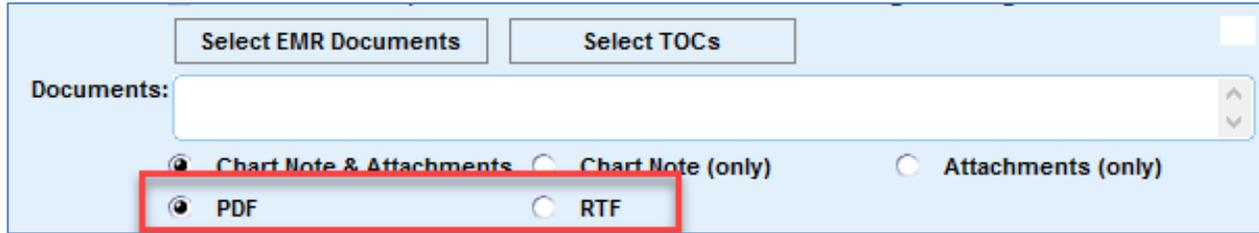


Documents:

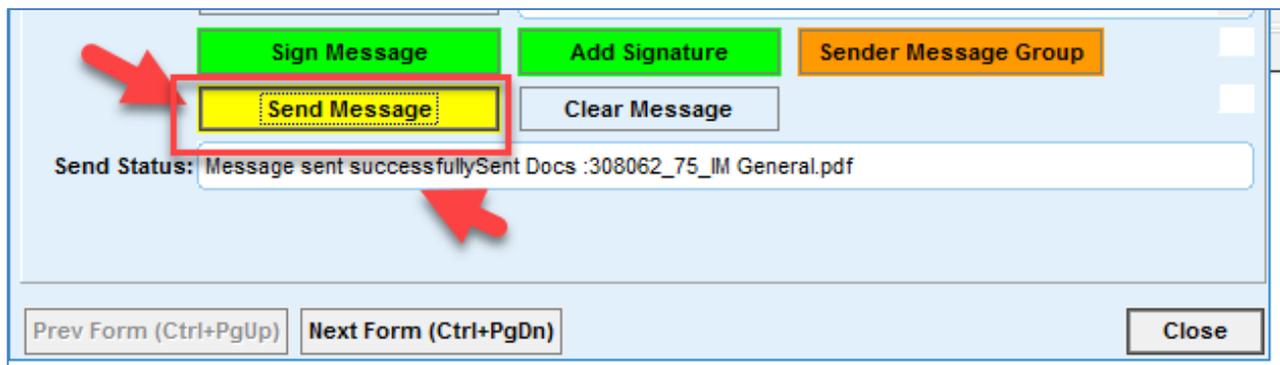
Chart Note & Attachments Chart Note (only) Attachments (only)
 PDF RTF

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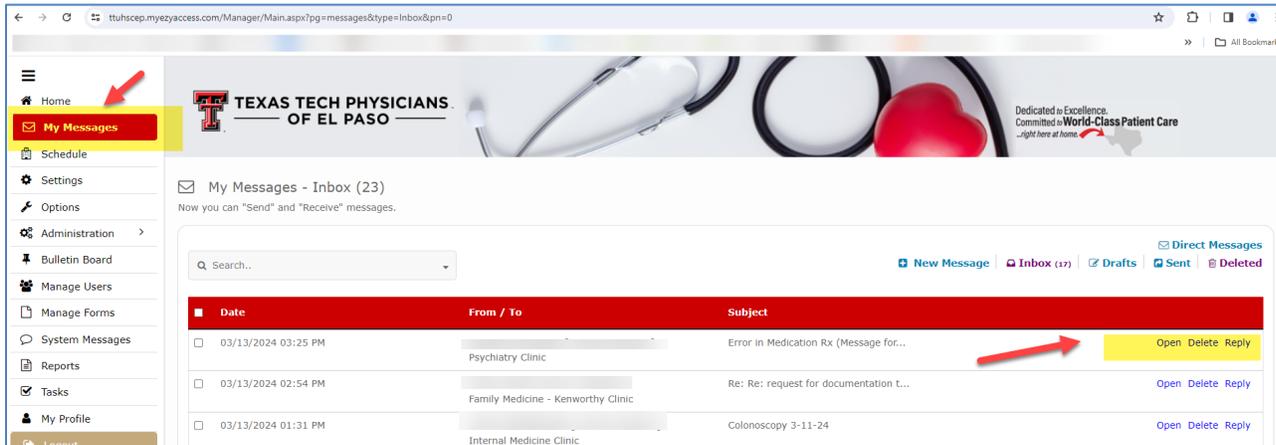
In addition, the user may choose to send the documents as either a “PDF” or “RTF” file.



Click "Send Message" to transmit the message to the patient’s portal. If the message is sent successfully, a timestamp will be added in the box underneath the “Send Message” button.



Staff members designated to manage incoming messages from patients can review patient replies in the portal by logging in.



Date	From / To	Subject	Actions
03/13/2024 03:25 PM	Psychiatry Clinic	Error in Medication Rx (Message for...	Open Delete Reply
03/13/2024 02:54 PM	Family Medicine - Kenworthy Clinic	Re: Re: request for documentation t...	Open Delete Reply
03/13/2024 01:31 PM	Internal Medicine Clinic	Colonoscopy 3-11-24	Open Delete Reply

If a patient requests in writing that their PHI be sent unencrypted, TTUHSC El Paso will inform the patient of the risks associated with doing so. However, if the patient insists, TTUHSC El Paso will comply, documenting the patient’s request in their record.

Knowledge of a violation or potential violation of this policy must be reported directly to the Institutional Privacy Officer or the Fraud and Misconduct Hotline at (866) 294-9352 or

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www.ethicspoint.com under Texas Tech University System.

Frequency of Review

This policy will be reviewed on each even-numbered (ENY) by the Institutional Privacy Officer, and the HIPAA Privacy and Security Committee, but may be amended or terminated at any time.

Questions regarding this policy may be addressed to the Institutional Privacy Officer or the Institutional Compliance Officer.

Review Date: March 11, 2024

Revision Date: December 8, 2016, November 19, 2019, January 25, 2022, March 19, 2024