

CT Provider Direct: Frequently Asked Questions

What is Direct?

Direct Messaging is HIPAA compliant protocol for encrypted messaging that supports the secure electronic exchange of health information between trusted entities.

Why is DSS supporting Direct for CT Providers?

The State of CT Department of Social Services is the state designated entity for overseeing state-wide Health Information Exchange and Health Information Technology. The primary goal in the Health Information Technology arena is to adopt and advance the use of national standards that support secure data exchanges and enhance interoperability.

What is CT Provider Direct?

In April 2014, the state of CT Department of Social Services stood up a Health Information Service Provider (HISP) to provision Direct mailboxes for providers participating in the Medicaid EHR Incentive program and their referral partners. CT Provider Direct is a simple webmail solution that meets the Direct standards and allows providers to communicate and securely send and receive messages and attachments. All you need to use your account is an internet connection. You can use CT Provider Direct whether or not you have an EHR.

How will Direct help my practice?

This program is the first which will allow for the secure exchange for ANY type of information between colleagues in a standard way. All you need to know is their Direct email address and you can start exchanging information securely, streamlining external communication for your practice.

- ✓ Optimize care transitions
- ✓ View Continuity of Care Documents with 1-click
- ✓ Achieve meaningful use goals and access incentive payments
- ✓ Reduce costs from fax, mail, couriers and VPN



Is Direct required for Meaningful Use?

The Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act's goal is to have information follow a patient through transitions of care and interactions with providers, hospitals, payers and HIEs.

The requirements:

- Meaningful Use Stage 1: requires provider-to-provider secure messaging of patient information.
- Meaningful Use Stage 2: requires the use of Direct messaging to support transitions of care and transmission of clinical summaries to third parties.

How is Direct secure?

Security requires encryption of the email message and attachment during transport AND verification that the sender and recipient are valid healthcare entities. Most programs require a physical government issued identification before receiving a Direct digital certificate.

Why do I need this if I already have email?

Email is unsecure and not a HIPPA compliant method of exchanging PHI. Direct provides assurance that health information is encrypted and shipped to a valid and verified recipient.

What kind of information can I exchange using this that I cannot exchange today?

The list of potential capabilities is endless, including: pre-op physicals, referrals, consults, and lab results from independent labs. This information can be viewed and is human-readable which saves time and helps with patient care and communications.

Does Direct allow me to import information into my EHR?

Yes, your practice can receive computer readable information that can be attached to the patient medical record. This information could include Word documents, Adobe Acrobat file (PDF), a TIF image or JPEG image. Since it



is content neutral it can also be computer-readable formats such as: CCDs, CDAs, HL7, XML, X12 or NCPDP script messages.

[I already have secure messaging with my EHR vendor - why do I need something else?](#)

CT Provider Direct allows you to send secure email messages with and without attachments to *any* person or organization using the Direct standard whether or not they are using the same EHR vendor as your practice uses. If your EHR supports Direct, then you do not need to sign up with CT Provider Direct. Direct is the first universal secure communication platform available to healthcare providers - it is an exciting development that will save your office time and money and will help you provide better patient care.

[Will this work with my EHR?](#)

Yes. Almost all EHR vendors have the ability to manually export and import information. Tighter integration can be accomplished and SES would be happy to engage with your EHR vendor to help them with the integration.

[Can I use my current email address?](#)

Direct requires the use of a secure email address with accompanying public and private key certificates. The domain for your account will be *@ctproviderdirect.org*. You cannot use the same email address for both secure and unsecure information.

[Who is Secure Exchange Solutions \(SES\)?](#)

SES is a Health Information Service Provider (HISP). SES provides HISP Services and Direct secure messaging products to a wide spectrum of end user customers including physicians, hospitals, labs, payers, HIEs, and patients.

[What training and support is available?](#)

We are happy to provide onsite training upon request. In addition, SES offers 24/7 web support for all of their products. Feel free to contact SES at support@SecureExSolutions.com if you have questions or issues. SES also offers web based training and on-site training by request.

