
Risk Matters: Requirements for Patient Accessing and Posting Results

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Practices should be familiar with the general requirements of the HHS ONC Cures Act Final Rule, also known as the ONC Information Blocking Rule, which became effective in 2021. Among other aspects of compliance with the regulation, practices should have documented procedures that outline how both in-house and outside lab results are made available to patients and when an [exception to access](#) (such as “Preventing Harm”) may apply.

Clinicians are required to respond without delay to a patient's request for access to lab results when these results are available to the practice. Medical practices should be mindful that outside lab results may be immediately posted to a patient's EHR. Therefore, a policy should be in place that requires prompt review of posted results as well as personal communication with any patient with an abnormal result, sensitive information, or a result requiring immediate action.

If you have confirmed that a patient has accessed the portal previously, it should be sufficient to notify patients of lab/test results via a patient portal provided the patient:

- has been educated on use of the portal
- signed a written consent or electronically agreed to receive information via the portal

If you have not confirmed that the patient has accessed results through the portal, other methods of communication will need to be utilized such as a phone call or First-Class U.S. Mail. ***Any patient with an abnormal result or a result requiring immediate action should be personally notified.***

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