



AHA Position on Patient Portal

The Issue:

In a comment letter to CMS on the proposed rule for Stage 2 meaningful use, the AHA raised a question about a proposal to provide patients with the ability to view, download and transmit large volumes of protected health information via the Internet through a “patient portal”. While the AHA strongly supports patients’ access to their medical information, we believe CMS’ plan is not supported by current technology, raises significant security issues, and goes beyond current technical capacity.

The Facts:

- Hospitals support patients’ rights to access their information because hospitals understand the importance of engaged and informed patients.
- Currently patients are getting their information quickly and in many formats, including electronic. Hospitals are committed to making sure that happens.
- Hospitals serve as guardians of patient privacy, so any posting of patient health information to the Internet must be done carefully. Hospitals must follow federal privacy and security requirements to safeguard this personal information.
- The reality is that because of technology limits, IT systems can’t talk to each other and it can take time to gather this information in once place. The way hospitals use the Internet to provide patient information has to be done in a way that meets federal privacy and security requirements.