

## **External Electronic Health Record (EHR) Access**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

8/25/2022

#### **Is there a preferred HIE access option available through my PHO?**

Contact your PHO for more information regarding preferred HIE data access options.

#### **Why direct non-clinical external users towards an HIE for data?**

Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) contain information about patients from sources all over the region and nation. Regardless of where the patient encounter occurs.

Munson EHR systems only contain information for patient encounters at Munson health facilities.

Different Munson facilities use different EHR systems.

Munson EHR system are not designed or purpose built to be used like an HIE.

Munson provides data in real-time to HIEs for the benefit of the patient, wherever they may be seen next.

#### **Are rules changing only for my practice?**

No. Rules are changing for all external users (not Munson employee) direct access to Munson EHR IT Systems. This includes external services providers, auditors, as well as local clinical community access. Rules for some parties have been in effect for some time.

This change brings Munson closer to industry best-practice nationwide as it relates to privacy and the protection of protected health information of patients.

#### **Does this policy change impact health registries at Munson Healthcare operates, including HealthRegistries, HealthIntent?**

No. Access to registries is not changing with new rules on Munson Healthcare EHR system access.

#### **Does this policy change my existing EMR interfaces between my practice and Munson? For instance, lab results interface.**

No. This policy change is regarding user access to Munson Healthcare EHR systems. Policy around interfaces, such as HL7 interfaces, are not part of this rules change.

#### **My organization prefers a workflow that utilizes PowerChart as before. Is there an option to continue?**

Not outside the bounds and limitations of the new policy. Munson Healthcare is committed to the protection of our patient's private health information. As threats to information evolves, policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

See questions *Why is Munson Healthcare changing its external user EHR access policy?* In this FAQ document for more.

#### **My organization is not a risk for data breach. Can we be exempt from the new rules?**

Munson appreciates the attention given to protecting the privacy of patients. As the covered entity under HIPAA, Munson is held accountable for notifying patients of breach of their private health information when that information originates at Munson. This is the same whether breach is caused by an employee, or any other external user.

Munson Healthcare assumes additional risk with existing practices when permitting wide latitude for external users direct access to the EHR compared to a typical health system nationally. For instance, although external users account for 20% of all Munson PowerChart users, they account for 60% of time spent investigating privacy breaches. Munson is required by the Dept of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to investigate all alerts of a privacy breach with in a specific period of time.

**My organization has additional staff beyond the permitted clinically licensed care team, which require access to a Munson Healthcare EHR for information needed to use Munson Healthcare self-service schedule systems. PWS (Physician Web Scheduler) is an example. Are they losing access?**

No. The new policy allows for up to three (3) schedulers in community organizations with at least one provider credentialed with a Munson Healthcare facility. This is in addition to the permitted number of clinical care team members. Access continues so long as direct EHR access is used for scheduling of procedures. Community organizations without association with a credentialed provider are directed to utilize their practice's electronic medical record (EMR) for data needed when self-service scheduling.

**Are there fees associated with accessing a health information exchange (HIE)?**

HIE fees vary based on situation and EMR manufacturer and may be as low as \$0. Organization patient population size, technical capability, and EMR technology provider all have an impact on fees for accessing an HIE.

- MIHIN is committed to working with healthcare providers in the Michigan region to find the best solution that suits your organization's needs. For more information, contact MiHIN's Help Desk ([help@mihin.org](mailto:help@mihin.org)) and be connected to your Regional Account Executive.
- [Commonwell](#) and [Carequality](#) national HIEs facilitate real-time data sharing between healthcare providers in all 50 states using EMR technologies already available in your organization. Contact your EMR technology provider and ask in which they partner.

**Is billing information available in the HIE?**

MiHIN MIGateway, accessible by any web browser, provides access to real-time information sent by Munson Healthcare, which includes billing, insurance, and demographic information if it is known by the healthcare provider at Munson Healthcare. Commonwell and Carequality also facilitate access to billing information via the sharing of Continuity of Care Documents (CCDs). In both cases, information comes from all over the region and nation, wherever the patient has been seen, including all major healthcare providers in the state – not just Munson Healthcare.

**Will Munson Healthcare reimburse me for any fees or costs associated with utilizing an HIE?**

No. Access-related costs to any HIE, if they exist, are considered a cost of doing business in a health environment when the focus is on population health. Munson Healthcare supports the costs related to supplying information to all regional and national HIEs in which it is a member, without passing those costs on to the community providers that utilize that information.

**My EMR technology does not currently integrate with CommonWell or Carequality national HIEs. How do I go about enabling this?**

Depending on your commercial EMR technology provider, a relationship exists with either CommonWell or Carequality national HIEs. For example, eClinicalWorks and AthenaHealth both [partner with CommonWell Alliance](#). CommonWell and Carequality also share documents between themselves. Contact your EMR technology provider regarding enabling access to a national HIE if you do not have this functionality enabled already.

For an organization using eClinicalWorks, activating CommonWell in the eCW EHX feature is something a superuser may be able to do themselves within the Product Activation section of the software. Before enabling, your office superuser should review documentation on the subject and contact your eClinicalWorks account representative for assistance. Ask about [eClinicalWorks Electronic Health eXchange \(eEHX\)](#).

**My practice uses eClinicalWorks for our EMR system. Is there an option for data sharing available for us?**

[eClinicalWorks Electronic Health eXchange \(eEHX\)](#) is a solution integrated with eClinicalWorks that is able to access the CommonWell Alliance network. Munson provides documents on patients seen at a Munson facility to the CommonWell Alliance network for the benefit of the patient, wherever they may be seen later.

**Where can I find useful documents and materials?**

Privacy related documents and materials, including the *Information Services Remote Access Agreement* template are available at <https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/hipaa>.

Information regarding credentialing is available at <https://www.munsonhealthcare.org/providers/healthcare-team/people/physician-services-and-admin-staff>

**I have questions, need assistance, or have completed forms or documents to submit.**

General questions and requests for assistance should be sent to the special email address for this transition:

- Send questions to [EMRAccessTransition@mhc.net](mailto:EMRAccessTransition@mhc.net)
- Include your name, organization, and contact info.
- Completed forms and documents such as the *Information Services Remote Access Agreement* and details on your organization's roster of clinical staff may be sent here as well.

**Is all PowerChart data available in the HIE?**

For the benefit of our patients, wherever they will be seen next, Munson Healthcare sends certain patient health information to regional and national HIEs in real-time. Information includes medication, allergies, lab results, radiology reports, billing and insurance information, emergency contacts, consultation notes, CCDs, and more. Munson Healthcare strives for data sharing current with USCDI (United States Core Data for Interoperability) standards and updates are made as this standard changes and expands.

**What are the new rules in place for Munson Healthcare concerning external access to EHR systems?**

The letter *PowerChart Notice – Removals and User List* contains a summarization of the new policy. A copy of the new policy in its entirety is available here: [https://munsonhealthcare-munsonmc.policystat.com/policy/token\\_access/8d1e51bd-37bd-4972-8a03-dae81429b176/](https://munsonhealthcare-munsonmc.policystat.com/policy/token_access/8d1e51bd-37bd-4972-8a03-dae81429b176/)

**Why is Munson Healthcare changing its external user EHR access policy?**

Munson Healthcare is committed to the protection of our patient's private health information. As threats to information evolves, policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. Policies and processes governing access for non-Munson Healthcare employees and medical staff users have recently changed. The change is the result of a risk assessment of protected and confidential data

entrusted to Munson Healthcare by our patients, consideration of current health sector best-practices, and the technologies available to facilitate data sharing.

The risk assessment discovered:

- Cyber and privacy threats are increasing each year, with an interest in stealing regulated patient data. Attacks against hospitals across the State of Michigan are growing each year, as is the potential for data breach.
- Health Information Exchanges (HIEs) are built for easy and effective sharing of patient information between separate and dissimilar health providers and health systems.
- HIEs have improved their access capability over time. For instance, today Michigan Health Information Network (MiHIN) provides access via a browser (no special software), which includes real-time data from Michigan hospitals and healthcare systems large and small, including Munson Healthcare. All major Michigan hospitals send data to MiHIN. National HIEs such as CommonWell and Carequality now integrate directly into EMRs through partnerships with EMR technology manufacturers.
- Hospitals nationally share information with HIEs to ensure data is available regardless of where a patient presents, rather than granting large numbers of non-employees direct access to individual hospital IT systems.
- Munson Healthcare has become an outlier amongst health systems nationally in how broadly non-Munson Healthcare employed community providers and support staff are permitted direct access to all patients in its EHRs. The Munson Healthcare Cerner EHR alone contains the protected information of more than 1.3 million patients. Non-Munson Healthcare employees accounted for >20% of users.
- Munson Healthcare assumes additional risk with existing practices when permitting wide latitude for external users direct access to the EHR compared to a typical health system nationally. For instance, although external users account for 20% of all Munson PowerChart users, they account for 60% of time spent investigating privacy breaches. Munson is required by the Dept of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to investigate all alerts of a privacy breach within a specific period of time.
- Investigation data shows that non-Munson Healthcare employed users are more likely to perform an impermissible patient lookup and a HIPAA violation than a Munson Healthcare employed user. Munson Healthcare is responsible under federal law to adequately protect the private patient data acquired while delivering care.

As a result, Munson Healthcare is changing its external user EHR access policy.

### **Who is eligible to be granted direct access to Munson Healthcare's EHR?**

The following providers and clinicians are eligible to be granted direct access to Munson Healthcare's EHR.

1. Munson Healthcare employees, including employed providers, with a job-related need for access directly to the EHR. Access for Munson Healthcare employees has not changed with recent updates to Munson Healthcare access policies.

2. Independent physicians (MD, DO, DMD, DPM, DDS) and advanced practice providers (CAA, CNM, CRNA, NP, PA, PhD, PsyD) who are **credentialed** by and **privileged** at a Munson Healthcare hospital, but not employed by Munson Healthcare. Access for credentialed and privileged physicians and advanced practice providers has not changed with recent updates to Munson Healthcare access policies.
3. Independent clinical staff with an approved license or professional certification (NP, PA, licensed nurse, licensed or unlicensed MA) and schedulers using PWS, with a sponsoring physician, who is credentialed on the medical staff of a Munson Healthcare hospital, and who provides direct oversight of the clinicians they sponsor. The following conditions must be met:
  - Organization has at least one credentialed provider (physician or APP) who is credentialed by Munson Healthcare and on the medical staff of a Munson Healthcare hospital and provides direct oversight of clinicians they sponsor.
  - Organization has completed the Munson Healthcare data use agreement "Information Services Remote Access Agreement".
  - Organization designates an Office Administrator responsible for
    - Submitting all access requests
    - Responding to Munson Healthcare inquiries
    - Submitting access removals within 24 hours of the user's status change
  - Organization is in good standing as it relates to security and privacy requirements as outlined in the data use agreement.
  - Organization clinical staff access does not exceed ratio of 4:1 for clinical staff to credentialed provider.
  - Organization schedulers access does not exceed three (3).
  - User has completed the Munson Healthcare 'Confidentiality Agreement'.
  - User is in good standing with Munson Healthcare.