



Iowa Department of Human Services

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INFORMATIONAL LETTER NO.1196

DATE: December 14, 2012

TO: Iowa Medicaid Physicians, Long Term Care (LTC) Facilities, Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC), Rural Health Clinics (RHC) Home Health Agencies, Behavioral Health Agencies, Nursing Facilities, Hospitals and Dentists

ISSUED BY: Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME)

RE: Direct Secure Messaging (DSM) and the Iowa Health Information Network (IHIN) Connectivity

EFFECTIVE: Immediately

The Iowa Medicaid Enterprise is now participating in the Iowa Health Information Network (IHIN) Direct Secure Messaging service.

Direct Secure Messaging (DSM) is a secure email service that sends emails and attachments securely, authenticated, encrypted health information directly to trusted recipients over the internet using the IHIN. DSM can be used in care transitions, discharges, referrals and in disease reporting. As the provider network grows you will find there are many opportunities to replace current postal mail and fax processes with this HIPAA approved email service.

Iowa is now accepting direct secure messages at the following addresses:

Dental Prior Authorizations IME.DentalPA@direct.iowahealth.net

Medical Prior Authorizations IME.PriorAuths@direct.iowahealth.net

Many of you have adopted electronic health records (EHR) and are working with your EHR vendors to support health information exchange. If your EHR vendor is not yet capable of connecting directly, or you have not transitioned to electronic health records yet, please be aware that you may begin using the web portal access method through the IHIN now and then change to an integrated method when your EHR becomes DSM capable.

Once your practice has signed up for direct secure messaging, there are no limits on the number of mailboxes you may request for your practice. IHIN recommends you consider adding your office and nursing staff to your list of authorized users. Simply fill out Attachment D of the participation agreement (which is discussed below) with the staff names.

A list of frequently asked questions follows with additional information. If you have additional questions, please send your questions to ehealth@idph.iowa.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get started connecting to the IHIN?

More information about the IHIN can be found at www.iowahealth.org/provider. The Direct Secure Messaging participation agreement is located under the State Resources menu item. Remember to identify your staff on Attachment D.

How much does it cost to participate?

The fee schedule is posted on the State Resources page located here: http://www.iowahealth.org/provider/resources_stateresources.html.

*Organizations who sign up for the Iowa Health Information Network's first service, Direct Secure Messaging (DSM) during the month of December will receive 6 months of FREE DSM service.

Do I need an electronic health records system to use Direct Secure Messaging?

No. You may access the Direct Clinical Portal internet website using your browser by just typing <https://portal.iowahealth.net> in the URL address line. Your email address format will be firstname.lastname@iowahealth.net. While logged into the clinical portal you can send a message without attachments to other providers on the IHIN. User guides explaining how to use the portal can be found here: http://www.iowahealth.org/provider/hie_user_guides.html.

My EHR plans to integrate with direct secure messaging in the future. When that happens, will I still need to use the portal?

Once your EHR has DSM integrated you will then begin working out of your EHR system to send direct messages. You will not have to log on to another website. Your EHR will, however, give you a new DSM email address which may include the Health Information Service Provider (HISP) domain as part of the name. For example if your EHR is EPIC and your organization is Iowa Medical Center then your new direct email address may be john.smith@IMCDirectEPIC.

Transitioning from the Direct Clinical Portal to your EHR HISP is analogous to changing email addresses. If you've ever had a Gmail account and then switched to a Hotmail account for example, then you know there are certain things you have to do when you make the switch. You need to save any Gmail messages you want to keep to your desktop or to a network file and you need to notify your contacts that your email address is changing. The same things will need to happen when you switch from using the Direct Clinical Portal to using your EHR HISP.

After your EHR connects to the IHIN, your Direct Clinical Portal user account will remain active for a period of time so you can send any messages to your EHR account, if needed, and also send a notification email to your contacts that your direct email address has changed.

*This promotion does not include organizations who intend to sign up for full query IHIN services in 2013. This is for Direct Secure Messaging ONLY.