



Site Overview #3

Learn how Penn State Health implemented OpenNotes

OpenNotes at Penn State Health

Penn State Health is an academic health system, anchored by the Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, with more than one thousand providers and more than a million annual outpatient visits. Penn State Health uses a Cerner electronic health record and patient portal called My Penn State Hershey Health. Nearly 100,000 patients have portal accounts.

Penn State Health first opened notes to patients in October 2013. Patients now have access to notes at all of Penn State Health's 63 outpatient clinics.

Key Features:

- All patient enrolling in MyPennStateHersheyHealth are included in OpenNotes.
- Providers may not exclude patients from OpenNotes.
- Clinicians can send a note to a private folder in the patient's chart. Private folders are not visible to patients on My Penn State Hershey Health. Currently all mental health and behavioral health notes go into a private folder.
- Parents may access their child's notes until their child is 14 years old. For children ages 14-17 parents lose access to their child's record unless their child grants permission. When the child turns 18, his or her portal account terminates automatically and she/he must re-enroll in his or her own account.
- Patients are empowered to enroll virtually.
- Emergency department documents are included in OpenNotes

Who Is Sharing Notes?

- All clinicians of the Milton S Hershey Medical Center participate in OpenNotes. All attending physicians (>1000), resident/fellows (>500) and advanced practice clinicians (PA/NPs) contribute in OpenNotes, Group's 900 providers, including 235 physician assistants and nurse practitioners, participate in OpenNotes.

How Are Notes Being Shared?

- Patient's access notes via a secure online patient portal called My Penn State Hershey Health.
- An adult portal user may grant "Proxy Access" to another person.
- Only notes signed after October 2013 are available on the portal.



How did Penn State Health Introduce OpenNotes to Patients and Clinicians?

- Champions worked with the Medical Group physicians and administration to obtain approval for implementing OpenNotes.
- Presentations were made by clinical champions at staff meetings and practice sites to gain support for OpenNotes initiatives.
- Faculty were surveyed for input on customizing the myopennotes.org FAQ documents for Penn State Health patients and clinicians.
- Administration supports ongoing promotion of OpenNotes to increase the number of patients on My Penn State Hershey Health.

Lessons Learned from Implementation:

- Not all departments have the same needs or concerns. Communicate with each department about their specific needs, especially for concerns about a particular patient population.
- Work with patients to develop appropriate policies around shared notes for sensitive topics such as sexual health, spousal abuse or eating disorders. Penn State Health developed a patient/provider “contract” to deter patients being treated for eating disorders from monitoring their weights via OpenNotes.
- If your EMR system cannot “hide” notes, consider creating “private folders” to allow providers to make certain notes unavailable to patients.
- Continue to engage with providers to stay updated on new concerns or hurdles in sharing notes.
- Creating regular reports to monitor enrollment and utilization is key to maintaining and enhancing success.

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