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# OpenNotes will launch in September, getting us on the same page as our patients

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*Tuesday, May 30, 2017*

Of all the diagnostic information, treatment or maintenance recommendations, and lifestyle guidelines you give your patients—about 80 percent of that is immediately forgotten ([according to a JRSM study](#)). If we make it easier for patients to see information about their visits, we have the opportunity to enhance communication, retention, and follow-through.

Enabling patients to easily access their clinicians' notes, through a secure online portal, is a national movement called [OpenNotes](#). Through OpenNotes more than 14 million patients across the country now have access to their notes, and Intermountain is one of about 20 health systems who plan to move in this direction this year. OpenNotes has been proven to improve patients' trust in their providers, the clinician-patient relationship, understanding of their own medical conditions, engagement, management of their conditions, and overall safety and quality of care.

## Helping us provide patient-centered care

OpenNotes communicates to patients that we see them as partners in their care and that we're truly vested in assuring their health is best preserved. It's the right thing to do, and patients and clinicians want it:

- ▶ **Patient experience and access:** Patients have always had access to their clinical notes but, until OpenNotes, have had to physically visit a medical records office to do so. OpenNotes improves information access and efficiency by meeting patients where they are—online.
- ▶ **Safety and quality:** Any mistakes that clinicians make in their notes can be identified by patients and brought to the clinician's attention for correction and improvement of safety, quality, and outcomes.
- ▶ **Patient engagement:** Patients who read about their conditions and treatment plans can stay informed, research to learn more, review what their clinicians said during the visit, and have the information to better participate in their care. According to the 2012 [Annals of Internal Medicine article](#), "Inviting Patients to Read Their Doctors' Notes," up to 87 percent of patients participating in OpenNotes reported feeling more in control of their care.
- ▶ **Patient-provider relationships:** OpenNotes strengthens communications and relationships between patients and providers by offering context for conversations about care, thereby enhancing trust and improving compliance with treatment recommendations.
- ▶ **Transparency:** OpenNotes supports Intermountain's transparency efforts by giving patients access to see clinician notes as they were written.
- ▶ **Preferred by patients and clinicians:** At the end of the experimental period in the [Annals of Internal Medicine study](#), 99 percent of patients wanted OpenNotes to continue and no clinician elected to stop.

## Will it add to my workload?

While you should be mindful that what you are writing will be read by your patients, we want you to continue to write as usual to fully capture their visit and care. Providers may need to consider avoiding medical jargon or abbreviations that patients may not understand. They will also need to be mindful of using terminology

that may be hurtful or offensive. Otherwise, patients do not expect clinicians to write notes in layperson language and feel respected for being granted access to this personal, albeit technical information.

Simply sharing what you're writing won't add to your workload. The after-effects of OpenNotes shouldn't add considerably to it either. The [Annals of Internal Medicine study](#) confirmed that with OpenNotes usage, the volume of electronic messages from patients did not change, fewer than five percent of clinicians reported longer visits, and fewer than eight percent of clinicians reported taking more time to address patients' questions outside of visits.

### **Just so you know...**

Not all clinical notes will be included in OpenNotes. Clinical note types that will not be captured in OpenNotes include:

- ▶ Disability or Workers Comp
- ▶ Billing Authorizations
- ▶ Confidential Office Visit Notes
- ▶ Protected Notes
- ▶ Outside Records (i.e. Administrative, Imaging/Cardio Tests, Lab/Pathology, LIP Reports, and Procedures)
- ▶ Care Management Notes
- ▶ Medications and Injections
- ▶ Provider Orders and Order Corrections
- ▶ Hospital Progress Notes (the hospital stay will be summarized in the discharge notes)
- ▶ School Records

### **Stay tuned**

More information and an instructional video will be made available to you over the summer to show you how to educate your patients on accessing OpenNotes through MyHealth, how you can create a confidential note, and other benefits to this shift in practice.

Questions about OpenNotes? Contact Dr. David Hasleton, Riverton Hospital Medical Director, at [David.Hasleton@imail.org](mailto:David.Hasleton@imail.org).

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