

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso HIPAA Privacy Policy

Policy: Release of Protected Health Information by Email	Policy #: HPP 4.3
Effective Date: May 18, 2016	Last Revision Date: March 17, 2026
References: https://www.hhs.gov/ocr/index.html	
TTUHSC EL PASO HIPAA Privacy and Security Website: https://my.ttuhscep.edu/elpaso/hipaa/	

Policy Statement

It is the policy of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) to ensure the confidentiality of protected health information (PHI) released by email. This policy defines the minimum guidelines and procedures individuals must follow when transmitting patient information via email. Unless otherwise allowed by federal or state law, TTUHSC El Paso shall only email PHI as outlined in this policy.

Scope

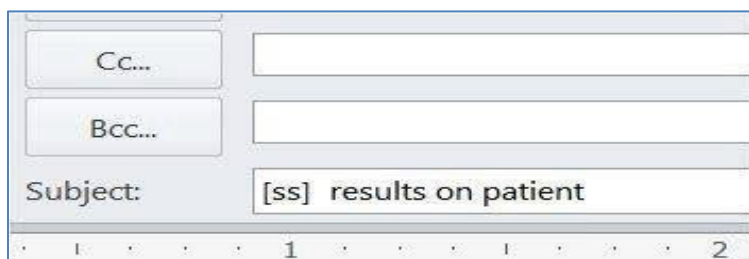
This policy applies to all PHI maintained by TTUHSC El Paso.

Policy

PHI is allowed in internal messages without encryption, i.e., the email must go to another ttuhsc.edu email address.

Transmission of PHI to external parties, i.e., any email address other than ttuhsc.edu or ttu.edu, must be manually encrypted. This includes emails to patients, providers, hospitals, payors, etc.

How to manually encrypt email: Type **[send secure]** or **[ss]** in the subject line right before the subject of the email, as shown below.

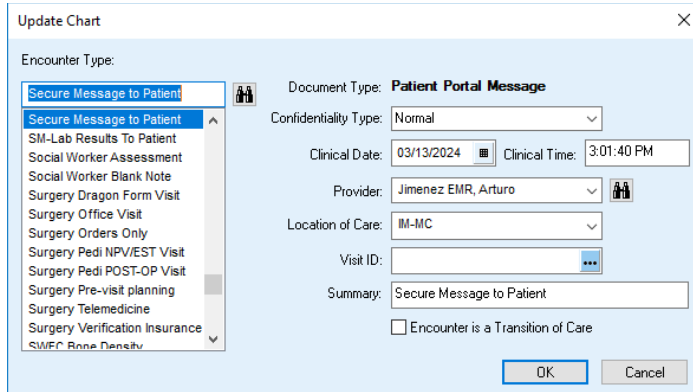


The screenshot shows an email composition window. On the left, there are buttons for 'Cc...', 'Bcc...', and 'Subject:'. The 'Subject:' field is active, and the text '[ss] results on patient' is entered. Below the subject field, there are navigation buttons: '<', '>', '1', and '2'.

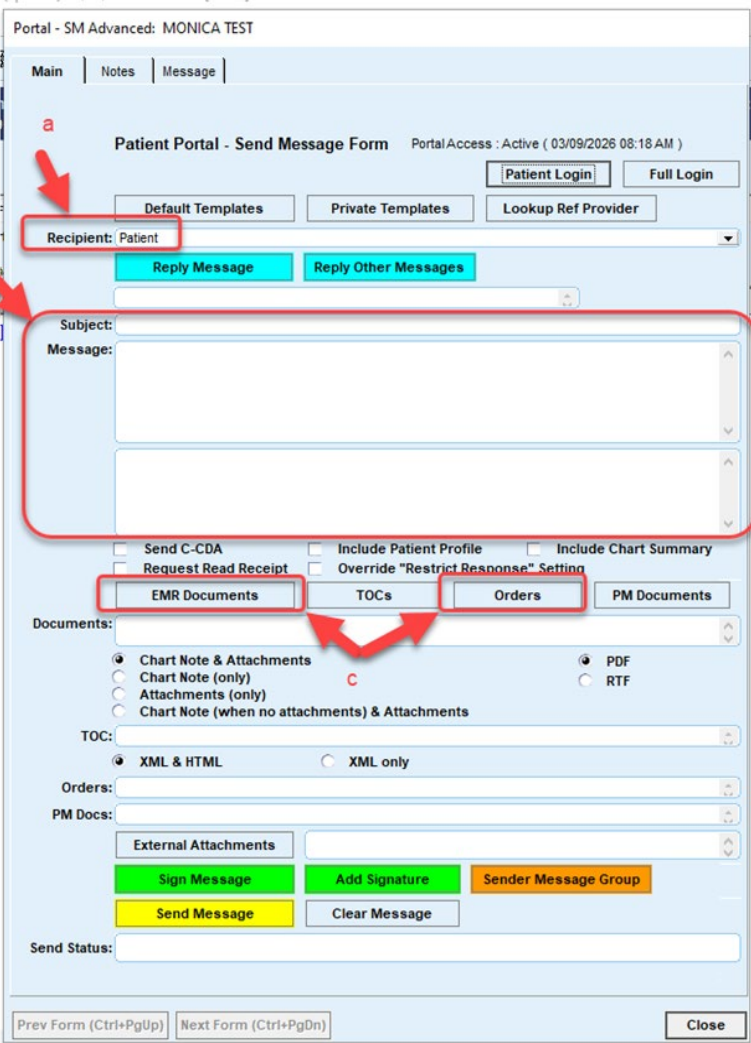
Transmission of PHI through EMR: The user may send secure messages via AthenaFlow EMR, which is the preferred method for sending PHI. The steps are outlined below.

1. Within the patient chart, select the Update button on the patient chart
2. Find and select "Secure Message to Patient" as an encounter

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- The SM Advanced form generates – each section is identified with a corresponding letter.



The provider/staff would complete the form as follows:

- Recipient. The clinical team selects the patient as the recipient.
- Subject and body of the message.
- Attachments that may be added to the message.
 - Documents
 - Orders

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To attach clinical documents to the message, choose the Select EMR Documents button.

Based on the Document ID in EMR, select the corresponding Document ID from the Patient Attachments box. Then click “Select and Close.”

If Adding orders to the message the selection can be done by check marking the orders needed.

The selected documents and orders will then show in the documents/orders areas within the form.

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The sender may elect to send the Chart Note & Attachments, Chart Note (only), or Attachments (only).

Documents: 55 : Ofc Visit Ophthalmology Visit: (03/06/2026 02:03 PM, Conf Type : |

- ☒ Chart Note & Attachments
- ☐ Chart Note (only)
- ☐ Attachments (only)
- ☐ Chart Note (when no attachments) & Attachments

In addition, the user may choose to send the documents as either a “PDF” or “RTF” file.

:03 PM, Conf Type : Normal, SIGNED)

☒ PDF
☐ RTF

chments

Click "Send Message" to transmit the message to the patient’s portal. If the message is sent successfully, a timestamp will be added in the box underneath the “Send Message” button.

External Attachments

Send Status: Message sent successfullySent Docs :5870_55_Ophthalmology Visit .pdf

Staff members designated to manage incoming messages from patients can review patient replies in the portal by logging in.

ttuhscp.myezaccess.com/Manager/Main.aspx?pg=messages&type=Inbox&pn=0


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My Messages - Inbox (23)
Now you can "Send" and "Receive" messages.

Date	From / To	Subject	
03/13/2024 03:25 PM	Psychiatry Clinic	Error in Medication Rx (Message for...	Open Delete Reply
03/13/2024 02:54 PM	Family Medicine - Kenworthy Clinic	Re: Re: request for documentation t...	Open Delete Reply
03/13/2024 01:31 PM	Internal Medicine Clinic	Colonoscopy 3-11-24	Open Delete Reply

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If a patient requests in writing that their PHI be sent unencrypted, TTUHSC El Paso will inform the patient of the risks associated with doing so. However, if the patient insists, TTUHSC El Paso will comply, and document the patient's request in their record.

Knowledge of a violation or potential violation of this policy must be reported directly to the Institutional Privacy Officer or the Fraud and Misconduct Hotline at (866) 294-9352 or www.ethicspoint.com under Texas Tech University System.

Frequency of Review

This policy will be reviewed on each even-numbered (ENY) by the Institutional Privacy Officer, and the HIPAA Privacy and Security Committee, but may be amended or terminated at any time.

Questions regarding this policy may be addressed to the Institutional Privacy Officer or the Institutional Compliance Officer.

Review Date: 3/3/2026

Revision Date: 12/8/2016, 11/19/2019, 1/25/2022, 3/19/2024, 3/17/2026