



Why Your Members Need the *Guide to Preparing for Online Communication With Your Patients*



The **Guide to Preparing for Online Communication With Your Patients** offers a [step-by-step planning process](#):

- A **checklist** of meaningful use and Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) requirements that can be fulfilled by electronic communication.
- A **worksheet template** to help assign and coordinate roles and tasks involved in planning and managing electronic communication.
- A **planning tool** to help identify patients' special needs that the practice must address to facilitate online communication.
- A **template letter** that can be customized and given to patients to explain the practice's electronic communication services and how to participate.
- A **list of online resources** for more in-depth information on issues related to online patient communications and health information exchange technologies.
- A **general brochure** that can be printed and given to patients explaining "What You Need to Know About Communicating Electronically With Your Healthcare Providers."
- A **short animated video for consumers** explaining the benefits of communicating online with health providers. It can be emailed or shown in your waiting room.



It's time to prepare patients for online communication, but until now there has been a lack of information on what they should expect or what providers can do to get organized.

Fortunately, the California Health and Human Services Agency has prepared a guide to help providers think through the steps necessary to communicate in the new world of health information exchange. The guide is designed to:

- [Help providers prepare their practice and patients for electronic engagement.](#)
- [Help consumers understand requests to go online now, what is involved, how they will benefit.](#)

Numerous resources exist to inform consumers about their rights to medical records, and privacy and security rules for their medical data.

What has been missing for California is basic information on what to expect in the coming months as providers work toward meeting Stage 2 and 3 of meaningful use, certification for Patient-Centered Medical Home, or requirements for Accountable Care Organizations.

Without regional extension centers or other ARRA funded assistance, **getting organized and thinking through all the steps to engaging your patients can be daunting.**

At the same time, **patients are likely to be bombarded with requests** from multiple providers to get online without an adequate understanding of what's in it for them and what they will need to do to participate.

When providers help patients become comfortable with these new communication tools – and prepare their staff to take full advantage of new online resources — they can **deliver better quality care.**

Patients who use health information technologies such as portals, personal health records, mobile apps, and secure messaging may be more efficient users of healthcare resources, better managers of their health behaviors, and feel more satisfied with the healthcare system.

Thank you for your assistance in making the Guide widely available.

Your constituents will find the Guide invaluable. Please help to get it into their hands. [Here are some ways you can promote it:](#)

- Send an email to your constituents linking to the Guide (*see template*)
- Post the Guide, consumer brochure and video on your website
- Include information about the Guide in your newsletter (*see template*)
- Include information about the Guide in provider and consumer education programs

