

21st Century Cures Act: Easy Access to Notes & Test Results

The 21st Century Cures Act is federal legislation that covers a wide range of health care initiatives, including a requirement that patients have easy access to their EHR information. Key impacts to providers include the sharing of clinical notes and test results.

Clinical Notes Sharing

Starting Dec. 31, 2021, Houston Methodist will automatically share the following clinical notes directly to patients' MyChart accounts, unless the provider deems that automatic release of a note may cause patient harm. These notes will automatically release once finalized, unless the provider enters an exception in Epic.

- Consultation Notes
- Discharge Summary Notes
- History & Physical
- Imaging Narrative
- Laboratory Report Narrative
- Pathology Report Narrative
- Procedure Notes
- Progress Notes

Results Sharing

Houston Methodist already automatically releases non-sensitive lab results 24 hours after finalization and COVID-19 test results immediately after finalization to patients via MyChart. Starting Dec. 31, 2021, Houston Methodist will also automatically release the following results to patients via MyChart.

- Imaging studies will auto-release 24 hours after finalization
- Patients admitted to the hospital will see results via MyChart 24 hours after finalization
- Sensitive lab results will auto-release 24 hours after finalization

Providers who are concerned that auto-releasing could cause patient harm can choose to defer the auto-release when ordering sensitive labs and release the results manually. If a provider elects to manually release a sensitive lab, the result will auto-release 10 days after the manual release option is selected.