



Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso Ambulatory Clinic Policy

Policy: Patient Portal	Policy #: EP 5.16
Effective Date: April 2015	Last Revision Date: June 2024
References:	
TTUHSC El Paso Ambulatory Clinic Policies and Procedures Website: https://ttuhscep.edu/opp/default.aspx	

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso (TTP- EP) to encourage engagement with the patient in their own healthcare by the use of technology to deliver secure communication between patients and clinical teams.

Staff at TTP-EP Ambulatory Clinics will provide patients and authorized family members or legal guardian the opportunity to access selected protected health information (PHI) using a secure, confidential website referred to in this policy as the patient “portal”. The portal gives the patient 24 hour access to elements of their medical records and a means of communication with their clinical team Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with the exception of scheduled holiday times. The goal of such convenient, real-time access to PHI is to educate the patient about their existing health care conditions and treatments and engage the patient in assuming greater responsibility for, and participation in, their own health care decisions.

Patients can view their portal accounts anywhere they have Internet access. They can review parts of their medical record including immunizations, lab results, active problems and medications, and more. Patients can view upcoming and past appointments, request new appointments and prescription refills, and request updates to their demographic information. Users can also send messages to their clinic asking non-urgent medical questions or to request medical documentation. Additional features and content may be added as it becomes available.

TTP-EP shall utilize a secure internet connection to maintain the privacy and security of each patient’s PHI. This secure connection shall be accessible by each patient only after unique verification information has been established in accordance with this policy. The patient shall be solely responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of their own authentication information.

Scope

This policy applies and will be distributed to all TTP-EP ambulatory clinics.

Procedure

All Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso Clinics (excluding Transmountain Practice)

- A. Activating a Portal Account: Patients receive an automatic activation email from our patient portal 24 hours prior to their appointment. This email includes the patient’s login credentials for <https://ttuhscep.myezyaccess.com/>. Credentials remain active for 1,000 days. Patients will not receive any further automated emails regarding patient portal. If the patient fails to log in within that specified timeframe, the system will automatically deactivate the account. If the patient wishes to reactivate their account or reset their



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password, the front desk will assist by reactivating the account or sending new credentials to the patient via email or text message.

Proxies may also request patient portal access. Front desk staff must verify that proxy is listed on patient's Personal Representative Request consent. If proxy is an active Texas Tech patient, Front desk staff would add patient to proxy's account. If proxy is not a Texas Tech patient, Front desk staff would need to create an account for proxy in the patient portal. Then add the patient's account to the proxy's account.

Portal Registration: Once the patient or their proxy receives the login credentials, they can proceed to access the secure website and follow the necessary steps to update their password. They will also answer the required security questions. The patient/proxy then becomes responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the username and password, and for all activities conducted through the Patient Portal.

Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso at Transmountain

- A. Inviting and Activating a Portal Account: Upon check-in at the front desk, patients are asked if interested in participating in patient portal. If so, the front desk staff will proceed to invite patient to portal. Nursing staff also have access to invite patients to the portal. Invites are valid for 90 days and may be re-sent to the patient upon request.

Proxies may also request patient portal access. Clinical staff must verify that proxy is listed on patient's Personal Representative Request consent. Proxy's email would then be added to patient's account in Cerner.

Portal Registration: Once the patient or their proxy receives the login credentials, they can proceed to access the secure website and follow the necessary steps to create an account and update their password. The patient portal will request the "Security Answer" provided by the clinic, which is the patient's zip code. Patient/proxies will then proceed to answer the required security questions. The patient/proxy then becomes responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the username and password, and for all activities conducted through the Patient Portal.

All Clinics

- A. Correspondence with Patients through the Patient Portal: All correspondence between patients and their clinic/provider in the Patient Portal is done through Secure Messaging/EZ Access. Messages sent by patients through their portal account do not go directly to the provider's EMR Desktop.

All patient portal messages are sent to the provider's assigned clinic's patient portal inbox for triage. Clinical staff will review and address all clinical issues and forward administrative issues to the proper person. They may forward the message directly to the provider, if necessary. The provider may respond to the patient or have staff complete the communication. Responses to any communication received from a patient through the portal should be sent no later than (3) business days.



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1. Patients are advised on the portal messaging webpage that the portal is not appropriate for communicating urgent medical issues or anything that requires immediate attention. Patients are instructed on the portal site that if an emergency exists, to dial 911.
2. When new information is available in the patient's portal inbox, a message is automatically sent to the patient's email address, notifying him or her to log in to view the information.
3. Any direct communication containing clinical information sent outside of the patient portal to an external email address must be securely encrypted, with "[SS]" included in the subject line.

- B. Adolescent Patients: Legal guardians or parents of patients' age 0-12 may gain access to the portal account with proxy access for a child. When the child reaches the age of 13, the portal account will be deactivated automatically.

ezAccess automatically emails a notification to the Guarantor login or to the Family login linked accounts 60 days before the patient's birthdate, informing them that their access will be revoked. Patients seen at the Transmountain campus who are nearing their 13th birthday will receive an automated email notification 30 days before their birthdate, informing them that their access will be revoked.

Access for patients aged 13 to 18, parents, authorized family members, or legal guardians may be reinstated by completing the Patient Portal Proxy Authorization Form at the clinic.

- C. Reason for Deactivating Portal Account:

Patient portal accounts may be deactivated for any of the reasons below:

1. Patient reaches age 13.
2. Patient requests a deactivation
3. Legal or medical guardian change
4. Patient terminates care
5. Patient violates the portal conditions and terms, uses abusive language or uses the portal for emergencies.
6. Patient expires.
7. If the physician believes that access to the portal is not in the patient's best interest.

For implementing portal access termination due to any of these reasons, please contact Clinic Information Systems at (915) 215-4111, selecting option 3.

Review Date:

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