Monitoring for Information Blocking Rule Improved Note Sharing; Button Is Confusing

By Nina Youngstrom

Despite the plain meaning of the word, clicking the "share" button in EPIC will not result in the sharing of progress notes and other electronic health information (EHI) with patients, two compliance professionals said. EHI by default lands in the patient portal, and physicians and other clinicians don't have to lift a finger to comply with a core requirement of the information blocking regulation.[1] In fact, pressing the share button will have the opposite effect.

"It's not the best title for that button," said Terri Thompson, system director of privacy and privacy officer at The University of Kansas Health System. "It has caused misunderstanding. Staff thought clicking the button meant sharing the note."

Fortunately, education and compliance monitoring have gone a long way to getting providers used to the idea that doing nothing is the right thing, said Christine Hogan-Newgren, chief compliance and internal audit officer at The University of Kansas Health System. With a tool it developed to monitor note sharing, the academic health system has seen an increase in note sharing, which is at the heart of compliance with the information blocking regulation, she said. The results of the ongoing monitoring of clinical departments are shared with physician and nursing leaders "so they are aware of the level of sharing and unsharing by people in their department," Hogan-Newgren said. Their improvement is in black and white.[2]

It's good timing. Starting Oct. 6, "the scope of EHI expands beyond the USCDI [United States Core Data for Interoperability]—to the entire electronic designated record set," said attorney Adam Greene, with Davis Wright Tremaine in Washington, D.C. That means more data will appear on the portal.

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