

Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) Advancing Care Information Performance Category Secure Messaging Measure Specifications

Objective:	Coordination of Care through Patient Engagement
Measure:	Secure Messaging For at least one unique patient seen by the MIPS eligible clinician during the performance period, a secure message was sent using the electronic messaging function of CEHRT to the patient (or the patient-authorized representative), or in response to a secure message sent by the patient (or the patient-authorized representative).

Definition of Terms

Secure Message – Any electronic communication between a MIPS eligible clinician and patient that ensures only those parties can access the communication. This electronic message could be email or the electronic messaging function of a PHR, an online patient portal, or any other electronic means.

Reporting Requirements

NUMERATOR/DENOMINATOR

- **NUMERATOR:** The number of patients in the denominator for whom a secure electronic message is sent to the patient (or patient-authorized representative) or in response to a secure message sent by the patient (or patient-authorized representative), during the performance period.
- **DENOMINATOR:** Number of unique patients seen by the MIPS eligible clinician during the performance period.

Scoring Information

BASE SCORE/PERFORMANCE SCORE/BONUS SCORE

- Required for Base Score (50%): **No**
- Percentage of Performance Score (up to 90%): **Up to 10%**
- Eligible for bonus score: **No**

Note: MIPS eligible clinicians must earn the full base score in order to earn any score in the Advancing Care Information performance category. In addition to the base score, MIPS eligible clinicians have the opportunity to earn additional credit through a performance score and the bonus score.

Additional Information

- MIPS eligible clinicians can report the Advancing Care Information measures if they have technology certified to the 2015 Edition or a combination of technologies from the 2014 and 2015 Editions that support these measures.
- This measure is worth up to 10 percentage points toward the Advancing Care Information performance score. More information about Advancing Care Information scoring is available on the [QPP website](#).
- The Secure Messaging measure under the Advancing Care Information performance category requires that a secure message was sent using the electronic messaging function of CEHRT to the patient (or the patient-authorized representative), or in response to a secure message sent by the patient (or the patient-authorized representative).
- The measure includes MIPS eligible clinician-initiated communications (when a MIPS eligible clinician sends a message to a patient or the patient's authorized representatives), and clinician-to-clinician communications if the patient is included. A MIPS eligible clinician can only count messages in the numerator when the MIPS eligible clinician participates in the communication (e.g., any patient-initiated communication only if the MIPS eligible clinician responds to the patient.) Note: MIPS eligible clinicians are not required to respond to every message received if no response is necessary.
- When reporting as a group to the Advancing Care Information performance category, the group combines their MIPS eligible clinicians' performances under one Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN). Therefore, they are not calculated based upon one MIPS eligible clinician's performance.

Regulatory References

- For further discussion, please see the Quality Payment Program final rule with comment period: [81 FR 77228](#).
- In order to meet this measure, MIPS eligible clinician must use the capabilities and standards of CEHRT as defined at 45 CFR 170.314(e)(3) or 45 CFR 170.315(e)(2).

Certification and Standards Criteria

Below is the corresponding certification and standards criteria for EHR technology that supports achieving the meaningful use of this measure.

Certification Criteria*	
§ 170.314(e)(3) Patient Engagement	(3) <i>Ambulatory setting only—secure messaging.</i> Enable a user to electronically send messages to, and receive messages from, a patient in a manner that ensures: (i) Both the patient (or authorized representative) and EHR technology user are authenticated; and (ii) The message content is encrypted and integrity-protected in accordance with the standard for encryption and hashing algorithms specified at §170.210(f).
§ 170.315(e)(2) Patient Engagement	(2) Secure messaging. Enable a user to send messages to, and receive messages from, a patient in a secure manner.

**Depending on the type of certification issued to the EHR technology, it will also have been certified to the certification criterion adopted at 45 CFR 170.314(g)(1) and/or (g)(2), and or 45 CFR 170.315 (g)(1) and/or (g)(2); or 45 CFR 170.315 (g)(1) and/or (g)(2) in order to assist in the calculation of this meaningful use measure.*

For additional information, please review the [ONC 2014 Standards Hub](#), [ONC 2015 Standards Hub](#), and [ONC Certification Companion Guides \(CCGs\)](#).

Disclaimer: *This document is intended only for informational purposes. It does not provide a complete summary of the applicable regulations and policies. We refer readers to the final rule with comment period titled Medicare Program; Merit-Based Incentive Payment System (MIPS) and Alternative Payment Model (APM) Incentive Under the Physician Fee Schedule, and Criteria for Physician-Focused Payment Models, 81 Fed. Reg. 77008-77831 (Nov. 4, 2016).*