

Clinician Guide to Immediate Result Release

Beginning March 2nd, 2021, Federal regulations require all results to be made available to patients via MyChart as soon they are finalized. Several organizations have already been doing this without any evidence of increased workload on providers. Here are the basics:

- All Ambulatory, ED and Inpatient results will be released to patients upon ‘final’ and available in Epic.
- Results include all laboratory and diagnostic imaging tests including pathology and genetic tests.
- Autopsy results are rare exception to this rule and will NOT be included in results release to proxies.
- Email “ticklers” to patients about new results will be sent once when the first result becomes available. Subsequent result ticklers are ‘snoozed’ for 24 hours.
- MyChart results page has updated FAQs for patients about results including expectations around result communications.
- Results on diagnostic test orders received via fax or paper by YNHHS lab or radiology will also be released to the patient portal immediately upon finalization.
- Commercial labs fall under the same legislation and will be required to make similar immediate release provisions under this legislation.
- Your practice may continue to follow existing practice standards for results and patient messages.

Results management best practices

Some organizations reported that before immediate result release, up to 30% of patient phone calls were from patients calling for their results, taking up valuable staff and physician time. Additionally, “failure to diagnose” remains a top reason for malpractice lawsuits that largely involves results not being communicated to patients. Timely access to results via patient portal helps mitigate both of these challenges.

General suggestions

- Set expectations at the time of requesting diagnostic testing. When you discuss why you are ordering a test, it is the best time to set expectations around worst possible scenario and that patients might see their results before you do. Patients have a choice to not view results if they don’t want to.
 - We share all results with you via MyChart at the same time that we get them. So, you may see them before we do. As the patient, you can choose when to view your results.
 - We look at every result and will contact you with anything that is concerning or that changes the plan we reviewed today.
 - Some results like MCHC or BUN/Cr ratio that often appear outside of normal range with little clinical significance. If you have concerns or questions, you can send us a MyChart message.
- Remind patients that you/your office will reach out to them about next steps. This may involve not just reviewing the result, but occasionally formulating a plan with other providers on the care team.
- When you are away from the office – rounding, in the OR, or away on vacation, make sure your Epic inbasket is signed off to someone. Grant access or set “Out” of office inbasket coverage – see FAQs.