

WHA & AHA Spur CMS Policy Change to Allow Secure Messaging Platforms to Send Patient Orders

On Feb. 8, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released [a memo updating their official policy regarding the texting of patient orders on a secure platform](#).

Specifically, the memo updated a policy CMS had last updated in January of 2018 in which CMS had taken the position that texting patient orders would be impermissible due to concerns with patient confidentiality and HIPAA compliance. Under the new memo, CMS states that "Texting patient information and the texting of patient orders among members of the health care team is permissible, if accomplished through a HIPAA compliant secure texting platform (STP) and in compliance with the Conditions of Participation (CoPs)."

The updated memo was spurred by the actions of one of WHA's members who contacted WHA hoping CMS would consider modifying their policy now that secure texting platforms exist. WHA was able to get this issue in front of the American Hospital Association (AHA) whose team then engaged in direct discussions with officials from CMS.

"This is a great example of direct, focused advocacy from one of WHA's members that we were able to get in front of the right people in order to spur action," said WHA President and CEO Eric Borgerding. "The result of this is in line with one of our main goals at WHA: reducing unnecessary regulations on hospitals and health care providers in a way that will benefit patients. We appreciate the responsiveness from our partners at AHA and the actions taken by CMS to make this update happen in a timely manner."

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