



Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health:

Medi-Cal Member Education and Resources for Patient Access API

What is an API?

An API allows two separate types of software to share information. This allows information that exists in one type of software program, like an electronic health record, to be shared with another software program, such as a health app. This happens by both type of software using a set of rules that allow for that communication. The information will be communicated or organized in the way the software is programmed.

Health Data Defined

Health information is the data related to a person's medical history, including symptoms, diagnoses, procedures, and outcomes. A health record includes information such as: a patient's history, lab results, X-rays, clinical information, demographic information, and notes.¹ Federal law allows you to access your health data collected about you going back to January 1, 2016 through an app.

How is my data shared?

Your health information is made available through a Patient Access API. This is required by Federal law. The API can share that information with an app. Sutter-Yuba has no control over the use of the data once it has been shared.

Questions for Consideration Before Sharing your Health Data

When you authorize health data sharing, the app you have shared your data with is not required to protect that information the same way a HIPAA entity is. For your protection, it is important to be selective and only share your health information with sources you trust. Here are some helpful questions when deciding to share your health information:

- How will your health data be used?
- Will your data be sold?
- Will your data be used for analytics such as targeting marketing or for other research?
- How will the app secure your data?
- How long will the app store your data after you no longer use it?
- Will there be a way for you to determine or select the way the app can use your data?

Information Sharing Safety

It's important to understand how to protect your health information online. Here are some helpful tips to help with online safety:

- Always use trusted software
- Never share your log in information
- Keep your files in a safe and secure location
- Always use password protection on emails with health data
- Make sure all software is password protected whether it be used on your computer, phone, or tablet

HIPAA Protections and Limitations when Shared with Apps

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is a federal law that does not allow Sutter-Yuba Behavioral Health, as a HIPAA covered entity, to share your health information unless for treatment, payment, or operations or other limited and specified circumstances. You can read more about HIPAA Privacy Rule at [Summary of the HIPAA Privacy Rule | HHS.gov](#).

The Department of Health and Human Services states, HIPAA covered entities are those that must comply with The Privacy Rule, "apply to health plans, clearinghouses, and any health care provider who transmit health information in electronic form in connection with transactions for which the Secretary of HHS has adopted standards under HIPAA."

Apps are not a covered entity and are not required to protect your health information under the same federal protections as Sutter-Yuba. While this does not mean every app will inappropriately use or share your information, it's important to understand that there are those that could.

Protections and Oversight

If you think your information was used without your permission, contact the Federal Trade Commission. Here is the information you will need to do this. Federal Trade Commission Consumer Response Center 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20580 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338) www.ftc.gov/idtheft

If you believe that a HIPAA-covered entity or its business associate violated your (or someone else's) health information privacy rights or committed another violation of the Privacy, Security, or Breach Notification Rules, you may file a complaint with the US Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights (OCR). OCR can investigate complaints against covered entities (health plans, health care clearinghouses, or health care providers that conduct certain transactions electronically) and their business associate: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F HHH Bldg. Washington, D.C. 20201 1-800-368-1019, TDD: 1-800-537-7697.
<https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf>

ⁱ [Health Information 101 | AHIMA](#)