

Learn how to comply with new information-blocking regulations

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New federal regulations stemming from the 21st Century Cures Act that seek to limit interference in the access, exchange or use of patients' electronic health information (EHI) are now in effect. To help ensure compliance and to incorporate the regulations into practice, an AMA continuing medical education module explains what physicians need to know about these rules going forward.

The CME module, "Information Blocking Regulations: What to know and how to comply," is accessible through the AMA Ed Hub™ online learning platform. It builds on two essential resources made available by the AMA last year.

"The AMA supports the Cures Act's purposes to increase information sharing between patients and physicians, improve patient care, and ensure EHI follows patients," AMA Immediate-past Chair Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, MD, MPH, said. "However, the regulation is complex with dozens of exceptions, sub-exceptions, and conditions. Physicians can turn to the AMA resources for reliable help that explains what the new rule means for them and their medical practices."

Information blocking explained

Information blocking can occur in many forms. Physicians, for example, can experience info blocking when trying to access patient records from other clinicians, connecting their EHR systems to local health information exchanges (HIEs), migrating from one EHR to another and linking their EHRs with a clinical data registry.

Patients can also experience info blocking when trying to access their medical records or when sending their records to another physician.

The first part of the module focuses on the "what is" of information blocking using examples, defining key terms, illustrating information-blocking practices and summarizing exceptions to the regulations.

These exceptions include privacy, security and preventing harm—which allows physicians to withhold information that they believe to be corrupt, inaccurate or could harm patients or other individuals.

Tips on getting started

The second part of the module focuses on the “how to” of compliance with information blocking regulations—providing a road map for compliance, questions to consider, factors for maintaining a compliance program and next steps.

The module explains how meeting the expectations of the new regulations doesn’t necessarily mean starting from scratch because a practice’s existing compliance program’s structure, policies, procedures and resources may offer the foundation for what is needed to comply with the new regulations on information blocking. The module also encourages physicians to reach out to their EHR vendors for support.

The module is designated by the AMA for a maximum of 0.75 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™*. Other AMA resources include a summary of the information-blocking regulations and an information blocking resource center with additional resources for clinicians and their medical practices.