RelayHealth

RelayHealth FAQ

COMMON CONCERNS

We will be overloaded with messages!

Although many practices fear an onslaught of patient messages, analysis of actual RelayHealth message volume experienced by physician offices over the past three years shows that these fears are unfounded. It takes at least 25 patients connected to get an average of a few messages per week; once you have 50-100 patients connected, you can expect to get a few messages each day. Even practices with 500+ patients on find the volume manageable – and preferable to interrupting phone calls or unnecessary visits.

We already have so much to do—I do not think we can handle another task
Many practices find that using RelayHealth decreases telephone tag with patients Each RelayHealth message can actually replace several phone calls between the office and the patient. You are not offering services via RelayHealth that you do not already offer by telephone. RelayHealth simply offers a more efficient channel for delivering those services. Results have shown up to an 18% reduction in phone call volume—independent studies by RelayHealth customers show that this form of communication takes fewer —tries|| to complete an interaction, and can actually reduce phone volume and administrative time spent on patient communication.

What about liability?
Feedback from malpractice carriers suggests they prefer this mode of communication to phone calls. It is secure, structured, and self-documenting. RelayHealth has received opinions from several major carriers and they all favor this type of communication over the phone.

Our patient panel is not Internet savvy
The national data on Internet usage supports high patient demand for this service across the board. Groups that you may not expect to use this technology, such as the elderly and minorities, are among the fastest growing Internet using populations. Nearly three-quarters of all adults in the U.S. now have Internet access at home or at work. We find that use of RelayHealth increases with age – our typical patient user is female between 35 and 54. Almost all (90%)...would like to be able to communicate with their physicians online.

Our doctors are not comfortable and/or interested in using a computer
There are physicians who are not comfortable and/or interested in using the computer for patient communication—in these cases, the support staff will take an active role in receiving and resolving the online messages.

We have many avid clinical users today who initially thought —no way, not me, not now, not ever – and now love the service.
Most experts now agree that online patient communication in healthcare is inevitable – there is no better time than now to get started and gain the experience

GENERAL FAQs

Q: How is RelayHealth different from regular e-mail?

A: RelayHealth messages differ from regular e-mail in that they transmit securely and confidentially. All messages provide an audit trail enabling provider and patient to view the entire message history.

Q: Will I have a RelayHealth e-mail address?

A: You will not receive a RelayHealth e-mail address. Rather, you check your messages by signing in to your password-protected Home Page. When a message is delivered to your RelayHealth inbox, RelayHealth notifies you either by fax or personal e-mail (your choice) that you have a waiting message. The email message you receive at your personal/business email account is only a notification that you have a message waiting in RelayHealth.

Q: Can more than one account share an email address?

A: Yes, the service accommodates that.

Q: Is the RelayHealth service secure?

A: RelayHealth uses a high level of security to protect the privacy and confidentiality of healthcare information transmitted through its messaging service. Unlike e-mail, which relies on multiple file servers distributed across the Internet; RelayHealth uses a single, centrally managed, secure database for all provider-patient communications. The service delivers all messages to a Web browser using 128-bit, secure-socket layer encryption. In addition, RelayHealth is HIPAA compliant.

Q: Is Secure Messaging HIPPA compliant?

A: Yes

Q: Where do the messages reside?

A: They reside on RelayHealth servers, not within the DOD domain.

Q: Is Secure Messaging connected to AHLTA?

A: No it is not – however you may copy and paste data from Secure Messaging into AHLTA, and vice versa.

Q: What type of hardware and software is necessary to run this service?

A: This service requires only a connection to the Internet and a Web browser. You can run this service using either a PC or a Macintosh computer, and supported browsers include:

Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 on Windows XP and higher

Firefox 2.x on Windows XP and higher

Safari 2.x on Mac OS 10.4 and higher

Q: Is it possible to enable certain message types and disable other types differently for each provider?

A: You would configure message settings at an individual level. Providers can configure their own message settings, and group administrators can configure all providers' message settings on their behalf either configuring each provider's settings individually and/or applying settings to all providers at once. Group administrators can also "lock" the settings in place, preventing providers from altering their personal settings. You can enable/disable message settings for individual providers on the Settings >> Members >> Message Settings page.

Q: I have the Out-of-Office setting activated to alert my patients that I am not in the office, yet patients still access me through the service. Why?

A: When your patients message you while you are marked as 'out of the office', their messages are delivered according to the message routing you set up; however, patients are alerted that you are not in the office. You may choose to have other members in your group triage messages while you are away, or you can check your account from a location other than the office. To have a member of your staff receive message notifications while you are out of the office, go to Settings >> Members >> Message Notification Settings and edit the settings for your personal inbox appropriately.

Q: I am a Provider – am I going to receive every message that comes to my clinic inboxes? A: Messages will be routed to inboxes, and then triaged according to your local policy/workflows. Many MTFs have an RN triage clinical messages, and then forward them as appropriate. Another staff member is sometimes detailed to triage admin messages.

HOME PAGE:

Q: Can I customize my Home page?

A: Yes. You can customize the 'At-a-Glance' tab of your Home page to list the inboxes (along with message counts) that you use everyday. The 'All Inboxes' tab of your Home page lists all of the inboxes to which you have access. You can view the current inbox counts (total, unopened, and overdue) by clicking 'Show Inbox Counts' next to the tabs. Click on the arrows next to your groups/teams to display the assigned members and inboxes.

You can also select Reminders to display or add favorite links to your Home page by clicking Edit View in the 'At-a-Glance' tab of the Home page.

MESSAGING:

Q: Can I change who is notified of a waiting message?

A: RelayHealth notifies you when you have unopened waiting messages, according to the notification preference (fax or e-mail) you specified during registration. Waiting message notifications via email can be sent at any of the following times: Immediately, 4:00 AM,
7:00 AM, 10:00 AM, 1:00 PM, 4:00 PM, 7:00 PM Pacific Time and via fax at 5:00 AM and
1:00 PM Pacific Time. You can also choose not to be notified of waiting messages. Specify your notification preferences in the Settings >> Members >> Settings box >> Message Notification Settings page.
You can choose to have a member of your staff receive your waiting message notifications by adding them to the notification list or by entering their e-mail address in the 'Alternate E-mail for Notification'. You can also use the alternate e-mail address to set up notifications to be sent to a pager or mobile phone (if text paging is supported).

Q: How can I tell who has been involved in this message, and all communication, both internal and to the patient?

A: In every RelayHealth message, the message thread contains a view of all message activity, including all CC recipients. Simply click on the orange arrow to show or hide the thread. RelayHealth displays messages with the most recent first.

Q: If a member of my authorized staff sends a message on my behalf does the patient think it came directly from me?

A: RelayHealth records and stores a complete audit trail of a patient's message history, including routing notes. When you respond directly to a patient message, your name appears as the sender of the message. Should a member of your staff reply to a patient, that staff member's name — as well as the provider's name — will appear in the header of the patient message.

Q: Can I attach documents, files, and other items to a message?

A: Yes. When responding to a patient message it might be useful to attach additional information as part of the treatment plan. Prescriptions, webVisit interviews, Web links, and files less than five megabytes are all accepted as attachments to messages you send. RelayHealth scans each file for viruses to provide an added layer of security. You can attach documents and other items to patient messages as well as referral messages and messages to colleagues. Can I receive file attachments from patients?

You may optionally allow patients to attach files to WebVisit, Note to the Doctor, Note to the Office and Billing Question messages. This option is available from Settings >> Practices >> Message Settings.

Q: Can any patient send me a message?

A: RelayHealth is designed to support providers and their established patients. It is not intended to for use in establishing a new relationship between a patient and provider. A provider must accept a patient for secure messaging in order for that patient to communicate with him or her.

Q: How quickly do I need to answer a message from my patient?

A: Providers are not required answer patient messages within a certain time frame. You choose your response time for each message type, and this information displays to your patients when they send the original message. **The response time should be set no later than 72 hours for non-urgent symptom-based encounters.**

Overdue message counts, which display on the Home page, are calculated according to business days (defined as 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday).

Q: Can I preclude a prolonged e-mail thread within Secure Messaging?

A: Yes you can, by not checking the allow a reply box.

Q: What happens to my messages when I have turned on my "Out of Office" notification?

A: To alert patients and colleagues that you are out of the office and unavailable to answer their messages, turn on the Out of Office setting (located on the lower part of the Home page under Settings). You can compose a personalized message for the Out of Office notification sent to patients and colleagues when they send you a message. You can also enter the date that the Out of Office notification should end, and RelayHealth will turn off the outgoing notification automatically on the date you indicate. Your messages will continue to be delivered to your inbox, and you can choose to have your messages triaged by members of your group by granting them access to your inbox and giving them Message Proxy (if you want them to respond directly to patient messages).

Group Administrators can change permissions administrators in the Settings >> Practices >> View Practice Settings page by clicking on a group member or inbox name and editing the settings.

Q: How do I get patients to enroll and use the service?

A: There are a number of tools, for example marketing collateral materials, signup sheets, and of course personal contact with patients as they check in, or as staff take vitals, or providers see patients.

Q: At what age do we need to ensure a patient has their own account?

A: Local policy for the Army is generally at age 16.

Q: What are the benefits of broadcasting?

A: Broadcast Messaging offers several benefits including: 1. Patient health management, 2. Saving both patient and provider time and Patients increased access to information.

Q: How do I delete my messages?

A: RelayHealth messages cannot be deleted; instead, they can be moved out of your inbox and stored in the Archive folder. Messages are archived automatically when you reply to them if you check 'Archive the original message when I reply' before sending your response. If a patient message remains in your inbox after you have responded to it, you can remove it from your inbox by checking the box next to the message (or several to archive in batch mode) and clicking Archive. To view the message in the future, go to the Archive folder.

Q: Can I refer my patients to another physician through this service?

A: Yes. The referral message allows a provider or staff member to send referral authorizations online to any provider in the RelayHealth network, or send them via fax to unregistered providers. Referrals can be exchanged internally or outside of your medical group or practice.

Referral messages are complete with patient information and referral details. Once the referral is accepted and the patient is examined, the provider completes a template response form that captures key details such as finding/diagnosis, treatment plan, comments and recommendations. Click Messages and select Referral Message from the Compose Options and then select a provider from the Quick Pick list, or add a new contact. How does "Share the online health record" work?

When creating a referral, you have the option of sharing the patient's Personal Health Record. This feature makes the patient's online health record accessible by the referred physician group.

1 If the patient is online, they will be notified of the share.
2 Your practice will be notified whether the office accepts or declines the share.
3 The patient may be able to send secure messages to the referred practice.

WEBVISITS:

Q: What is a webVisit?

A: A webVisit is the RelayHealth brand name for its message service that allows for an online medical evaluation between a provider and an established patient. The webVisit guides patients through an interactive interview process based on their primary complaint, and then builds a succinct message to a provider based upon answers provided by a patient. Providers can reference their patient's Personal Health Record as well as the patient's message in formulating a treatment plan.

Q: Can I create my own webVisits?

A: At this time, providers cannot create custom webVisits in RelayHealth. However, we welcome your feedback and requests for new and improved webVisits; please contact us.