

Secure Messaging: Connecting with Your Patients

Use	Tips/Considerations
Enhancement to a visit or phone call	<p>Use to respond to follow-up and non-urgent questions, or low acuity issues (e.g., headaches, upper respiratory infection, sinus Sx, cough, lower back pain, allergy Sx, muscle/joint pain)</p> <p>Use to encourage members to view their labs on MyGroupHealth and to respond to questions about lab results</p> <p>Reinforce relationships with low contact members by suggesting they use secure messaging for simple questions.</p> <p>Suggest secure messaging to students, business or vacation travelers, patients with limited mobility, new moms, shift workers</p> <p>At your convenience connect with high need patients</p>
To help patients prepare for visit	<p>Welcome patient to the practice or department</p> <p>Provide links to patient education and self-care prior to visit (e.g., Health Encyclopedia)</p> <p>Remind patients on how to best prepare for their upcoming visit</p> <p>Emphasize other convenient online services</p>
To follow up after patient visit	<p>Track responses and make adjustments to current medication and therapy for chronic illness or symptom relief</p> <p>Communicate information about lab results</p> <p>Manage patients' anxiety about their treatment plan, their list of concerns or their last minute requests</p> <p>Use as outreach to coach and support behavioral changes</p>
To respond with breaking health news	<p>Develop personal and departmental SmartPhrases to make patients aware of recent health-related news stories regarding their health concerns</p> <p>Guide patients to relevant online information</p>
To answer common questions	<p>Use SmartPhrases or refer to MyGroupHealth to answer common questions or to send routine instructions</p>
To help with managing chronic conditions	<p>Promote self care and patient education</p> <p>Encourage shared decision-making for better health outcomes</p> <p>Remind patients that they can review past office visits and lab results at MyGroupHealth</p> <p>Support patients with limited mobility</p>
To link patients to educational resources	<p>Refer patient to MyGroupHealth to access online features (health encyclopedia, drug encyclopedia, appointments, Rx refill, new member support)</p>

Note: Although secure messaging is a good way to outreach to patients, it should not be used to provide information critical to the patients care unless the clinician has a mechanism or process to ensure the patient has received and understands the information.



Composing Effective, Personal Messages

To craft an effective electronic message and build virtual rapport, make your message personal, apply effective face-to-face visit practices, and follow secure messaging etiquette. Below are some tips for composing secure messages.

Make It Personal

Begin and end messages on a personal note as well as conveying empathy with your response by using these or similar phrases liberally in your messages:

Start Personally

Good to hear from you.
Thanks for letting me know how you are doing.
Thanks for keeping in touch.
It was great seeing you recently.
I hope you are feeling better.
Happy to hear from you.
I'll be happy to help you.
Thanks for your question.
Thanks for the update.
Let me answer your question right away.

Demonstrate Empathy

I can see how xx would be a concern for you.
I can appreciate what an impact xx must be having on you.
I can understand that it must be worrisome to you when you aren't feeling better.
You've been doing a great job taking care of the symptoms/managing your pain/keeping me informed.
What you've been going through sounds really difficult.
Sounds like you are worried/scared/frustrated/upset.
The symptoms you are having can be really miserable.
Many of my patients are having a rough time with this virus.
I understand that you want to make sure your xx isn't the sign of something more serious.

End Personally

I hope this information is helpful.
Keep me posted.
Please stay in touch.
I hope you feel better.
I really want to hear from you.
Give my regards to your family.
Have a great vacation/summer/trip.
Feel free to keep in touch.