

PROVIDER'S GUIDE TO THE 21ST CENTURY CURES ACT

Issue 1: Sky-High Overview



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WHAT IS THE CURES ACT?

The 21st Century Cures Act was signed into law in 2016.



Next, the rule was passed to both the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for further review. In March 2020, ONC released a Cures Act Final Rule, which the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) finalized in March 2020.

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE CURES ACT?

With hundreds of pages written and billions of dollars allocated, the 21st Century Cures Act was designed to revolutionize healthcare by taking full advantage of today's technological capabilities.

The key goals include:

Improve Interoperability

- Implementation of HL7 FHIR unites healthcare apps by creating a common set of APIs to enable these platforms to share data and communicate with ease.
- Universal API standards simplify the implementation of HIT apps.
- Streamlining secure data flow prevents information blocking, breaks down data silos, and enables a health app economy.

Accelerate Advancement

- \$5 billion allocated to NIH will advance precision treatment.
- A \$1 billion allocation will help fight the opioid epidemic crisis.
- A modified FDA drug approval process and facilitated approval of specific drugs will streamline drug & device development.
- Ease the regulatory burdens of EHR systems and HIT.

Empower Patients

- Patients will experience greater ease when accessing their PHI.
- Patients will enjoy smoother experiences using HIT apps.
- Mental health services will be improved with: behavioral and mental health insurance coverage, deescalation training for law enforcement professionals, grants for mental health resources, and intervention programs.

The information presented throughout this Cures Act series is for educational purposes only, and it does not constitute legal advice.

THE CURES ACT TIMELINE

Learn when each regulation becomes mandatory.

December 13

Cures Act Signed Into Law

Barack Obama signed the 21st Century Cures Act into law to usher in a new age of health IT interoperability and end information blocking for crucial health records.

2020

March 9

Cures Act Final Rule Published

The ONC Cures Act Final Rule was published with changes to the original Cures Act designed to enhance patient and provider access to electronic health information.

April 5

Cures Act Final Rule Activates

Health IT Developers must attest to the:

- Assurances Condition of Certification
- Communications Condition of Certification and the Communications Maintenance of Certification
- API Condition and Maintenance of Certification
- Information Blocking Condition of Certification

December 15

Real World Testing Plans

Health IT Developers must make their Initial Real World Testing Plans to test the real world interoperability use of their apps in the settings for which they are marketed publicly available on the Certified Health IT Products List (CHPL).

April 1

Conditions of Certification

Health IT Developers must attest to the Conditions and Maintenance of Certification requirements.

This attestation must be shared twice annually to ONC-ACBs, and the first period of attestation was open between April 1-30.

October 6

All EHI Must Be Available

Healthcare Providers must be aware that the definition for EHI is no longer limited to the data elements in the USCDI.

It's important to note that HIPAA regulations supercede Cures Act rules, so you are still permitted to decline to release certain records if doing so would violate HIPAA.

December 31

HL7 FHIR API Update

Health IT Developers must update to the new HL7 FHIR API per the Cures Act implementation specification standards to enhance interoperability with single and multiple patient services.

Healthcare Professionals must upgrade to the Cures Edition of Health IT Software.

March 15

Initial Real World Testing Results

This is the deadline for Health IT Developers to submit Real World Testing results from calendar year 2021. These reports will be available publicly on the Certified Health IT Product List (CHPL).

December 31

EHI Export Capabilities

Health IT Developers must enable users to create single export files containing all of the EHI produced and/or managed for a single patient on the platform at will.

Health IT Developers must also be able to export this information for their entire database.

CURES ACT COMPLIANCE

Here's what you can expect to learn in future issues.

HOW CHARTREQUEST CAN HELP

A majority of the work to ensure Cures Act compliance is in the hands of the health IT developers you can trust.

In this series, we'll focus on what healthcare professionals need to know for continued compliance with these new regulations.

Issue 2

EHI, Information Blocking, and Exceptions

First, we'll outline the core Cures Act goal of improving both interoperability for HIT apps and EHI retrieval for patients.

Issue 3

What is an API?

We'll explain how Application Programming Interfaces function and why they're essential for health IT software interoperability.

Issue 4

Simplifying SMART, HL7, and FHIR

After we cover what you need to know about APIs, we'll break down the specific APIs required for Cures Act compliance.

Issue 5

Best Practices and Noncompliance Penalties

We'll connect the information shared in the previous issues and explain best practices to help your organization stay compliant.

With more than a decade of experience securely transmitting medical, imaging, and billing records, our ROI software is designed to simplify the compliant release of information.

Please stay tuned, and we'll provide you with key information to help your organization stay compliant with the Cures Act.