

Patient Confidentiality Concerns: Mailings and Billing

Patient Issue	Patient Request	Solution	How to
Vacation or School Address	Patient wants to receive their mail at a different address temporarily (ex. going on extended vacation).	Add a temporary address to the patient's demographics.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add a temporary address to the patient's demographics. 2. Set the date range during which the address is to be used. 3. Tell patient they must contact the PSC at 866-211-6588 to change where bills are mailed.
Safety Concern	Patient wants their mail sent to a different address for an extended time due to safety concerns (ex. patient is victim of domestic violence).	Option 1: Update the patient's permanent address.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change the patient's permanent address in the patient's demographics. 2. Tell patient they must contact the PSC at 866-211-6588 to change where bills are mailed. <p><i>Note – A warning pop-up will fire if the patient and guarantor are "Linked." Click "Yes" to complete the change of address.</i></p>
Safety Concern	<p>Patient wants their mail sent to a different address for an extended time due to safety concerns (ex. patient is victim of domestic violence).</p> <p><i>This changes where clinical mail goes. It <u>does not</u> impact where bills are sent UNLESS they call the PSC.</i></p>	Option 2: Add a confidential address to the patient's demographics.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add a confidential address to the patient's demographics. 2. Set the date range during which the address is to be used. 3. Tell patient they must contact the PSC at 866-211-6588 to change where bills are mailed.
Self-Pay	Patient wishes to pay for their services out-of-pocket, in full and requests that no information about those services be released to their insurance.	Follow the HITECH procedure to prevent billing the insurance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add the HITECH flag to the encounter during scheduling. 2. Add the DNBI flag to the encounter (this will prompt you to remove the insurance from this encounter). 3. Provide patient with the Acknowledgement Form and e-sign the form. <p><i>Exception – we cannot fulfill this request if patient has MassHealth or Health Safety Net.</i></p>

Beware: Patient privacy can be impacted by billing and insurance issues.

- If a patient asks to have their mail go to a different address, update their demographics according to the steps above, but make sure they also contact the Patient Services Center (PSC) to update their billing information.

The PATCH Act: Regardless of where we send patient mail or bills, their insurance company could still send an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) to the subscriber's address. We cannot stop this, but a Mass. law called the "PATCH" Act allows a patient to tell their health insurer where to send an EOB or not to send it at all. If a patient is worried about their confidentiality, let them know to contact their health insurer directly.

Questions? Contact the Privacy Office at 617-726-1098 or MGHPrivacyOffice@partners.org