PATIENT ACCESSIBLE (OPEN) NOTES
Building Patient Engagement, One Note at a Time

WRITING
Write as if your patient will read your notes.

✔ Do:
• Use plain language
• Give definitions
• Use patient quotes
• Record information objectively and sensitively
• Add resources to notes (e.g., links to apps or websites)

✗ Do Not:
• Use medical or military jargon
• Assume patient knows terminology
• Use detailed information about patients’ family or significant others

ENGAGEMENT
Engage as if your patient will have to teach their family member.

✔ Do:
• Invite patients to read and edit notes with you
• Teach patients how to access notes
• Use any speech-to-text program in the presence of the patient
• Invite patients to correct any statements they feel are inaccurate
• Discuss the assessment and plan with the patient in the room and capture that in the note

✗ Do Not:
• Assume patient’s silence as understanding or agreement
• Assume patient knows how to access notes between appointments
• Leave the room without going through notes with the patient

AREAS TO CONSIDER OF PATIENT SENSITIVITY
• Ethnicity
• Gender
• Physical appearance and hygiene

PATIENT PORTAL
Patients can:
• Review their notes
• Provide feedback
• Ask questions
• Share concerns
• Correct any errors

This product developed by the Connected Health Branch, Defense Health Agency, May 2021.
For more information visit health.mil/ConnectedHealth.