

## Patient Access API and Member Data Access

► **What is the Patient Access API?** The Patient Access API allows Medi-Cal members to access their health records using secure third-party apps of their choice. To learn more, visit CMS Interoperability and Patient Access Fact Sheet (<https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/interoperability-and-patient-access-fact-sheet>)

► **Accessing Your Medical Records:** Medi-Cal members have the right to access their behavioral health and substance use treatment records. Currently, records may be requested directly through the County's medical records process. Request records here: [https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/mental\\_health\\_services\\_adult\\_older\\_adult/medical\\_records.html](https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/bhs/mental_health_services_adult_older_adult/medical_records.html).

- A **Patient Access API portal** is forthcoming, which will allow members to view and share their health records securely through third-party apps. Once live, data will be available within one business day of receipt or adjudication, in accordance with federal interoperability requirements. We will update this page with the portal link once it becomes available.

► **Protecting Your Health Information.** When using third-party apps, it's important to understand how your health information may be used or shared. We encourage members to:

- Read the app's privacy policy before connecting it to your health records
- Use strong passwords and enable two-factor authentication
- Avoid using shared or public devices for accessing health apps
- Be aware that many third-party apps are not covered by HIPAA protections
- Learn more:
  - Protecting Your Health Information When Using Apps: [How Can You Protect and Secure Health Information When Using a Mobile Device? | HealthIT.gov](#)
  - How to Keep Your Health Information Private and Secure: [Your Health Information Security | HealthIT.gov](#) >

► **Understanding HIPAA and Non-HIPAA Apps.** Not all health apps follow the same privacy rules. Apps from your provider, clinic, or health plan are usually covered by **HIPAA**, which offers strong privacy protections. However, many third-party apps are **not covered** by HIPAA. That means:

- They may collect or share your data differently
- Their privacy policies should be reviewed carefully
- HIPAA protections may not apply if your data is misused
- Learn more:
  - Your Health Information Privacy Rights: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/index.html>
  - What to Look for in a Health App's Privacy Policy: [Use It - The Guide to Getting and Using Your Health Records - HealthIT.gov](#) >

► **Your Privacy Rights: OCR and FTC Oversight.** Depending on the app or provider, your health information may be regulated under HIPAA or other federal consumer protection laws.

- **If the app or provider is HIPAA-covered** (e.g., health plans, hospitals): Oversight is provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, **Office for Civil Rights (OCR)**.
  - Your Health Information Privacy Rights: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-individuals/index.html>
  - File a HIPAA Complaint: <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/filing-a-complaint/index.html>
- **If the app is not covered by HIPAA** (e.g., many wellness or fitness apps): Oversight is provided by the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)**.
  - Health Privacy and Security: [Protecting Your Privacy Online | Consumer Advice](#) >
  - File a Complaint with the FTC: <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/>

► **How to File a Complaint.** If you believe your health privacy rights have been violated, you may submit a complaint to the appropriate federal agency:

- To file a HIPAA complaint (OCR – U.S. Department of Health & Human Services), [Submit a HIPAA Complaint](#). Use this if the issue involves a covered provider, clinic, or health plan.
- To file a privacy complaint for a non-HIPAA app (FTC), [Submit a Complaint to the FTC](#). Use this if the issue involves a fitness, wellness, or other third-party app not regulated under HIPAA.