

# GET TO KNOW DIRECT

## What is Direct?

### *Direct Exchange improves care coordination*

Direct Secure Messaging, often called Direct, is a ready-to-use, secure, and HIPAA-compliant means of communication. It's often embedded in technology you already use, to allow for the right information to be communicated at the right time to better coordinate patient care.



## Benefits of Direct

- Improves communication for coordinated care
- Safely share the information needed to improve outcomes
- Eliminates redundant tests and procedures
- Reduces the cost of care and convenience
- Provides possibility of data integration directly into your technology
- Promotes patient and provider satisfaction



### How does Direct work?

*Direct Secure Messaging uses the Direct Standard™*

The Direct Standard™ is a widely-adopted protocol for secure encrypted Communication over a network. While that may sound fancy, Direct is as easy as email and more efficient than fax, used simply by sending a message to another Direct Address.

### How can I use Direct?

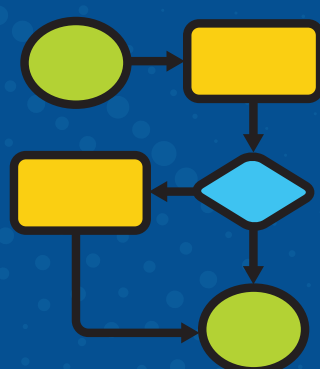
*Trusted Direct Addresses allow for Direct Secure Message exchange*



Messages can be exchanged from one Direct Address to another. Direct Addresses are tied to a vetted identity and may be issued at the organization, department, or individual level, and may be included in the DirectTrust National Directory. More than 2.4 million Direct Addresses exist throughout the US.

## When can I use Direct?

### *Direct Secure Messaging is adaptable*



#### Workflows using Direct

Direct Secure Messaging is best known for specific workflows, like referrals, transitions of care, or notifications, but is expanding in use cases all the time. Implementation may vary by technology vendor.

#### Content accessibility of Direct

Any type of attachment can be included in a Direct Secure Message. Messages can come with a "payload", like a C-CDA, that can be ingested into EHRs. Implementation (including acceptable payloads) may vary by technology vendor.



### Why is Direct trusted?

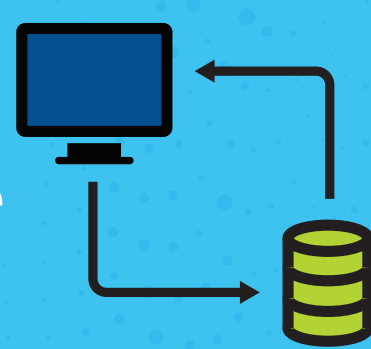
*Members of the Direct Trust Network are accredited*

Organizations called HISPs (Health Information Service Providers) are accredited by DirectTrust to ensure compliance with the Direct Standard™, guidelines far beyond HIPAA, that prove they can facilitate exchange and be a gateway to the secure and trusted network.

### Who provides access to the trusted network?

*Technology vendors access the network through the Accredited HISPs*

Technology vendors (like EHR companies, registries, interoperability platforms, referral networks, and more) contract with accredited organizations to enable users to access the DirectTrust network and provide users the ability to leverage forever expanding Direct Secure Messaging use cases to improve patient care.



## Who supports Direct?

### *DirectTrust is the custodian of Direct*

DirectTrust is a non-profit organization of members who convene to support and advance trust in secure health information exchange. DirectTrust acts as the custodian of the Direct Standard™ and accredits organizations to ensure compliance, allowing for a trusted communication network as a result.

**Want to learn more about how to benefit from your use of Direct interoperability?**

Contact your Technology Vendor or visit [www.DirectTrust.org](http://www.DirectTrust.org).



## Direct Secure Messaging Use Cases

[Direct Secure Messaging](#), commonly known as Direct, is a secure and reliable communication method, widely used for transmitting sensitive information between trusted parties in healthcare. Direct employs digital certificates and a Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to encrypt messages, ensuring that only the intended recipient can decrypt it. Leveraging the [Direct Standard®](#), Direct Secure Messaging is instrumental in enhancing interoperability among diverse health technologies and organizations.

### Key Use Cases

Direct Secure Messaging is versatile, supporting a variety of critical healthcare functions including:



Electronic Referrals  
and Continuity of Care



Transition from Fax-  
Based Workflows



Admit/Discharge/  
Transfer Notifications



360x for Closed  
Loop Referrals



Skilled Nursing Facility  
Care Coordination



Transfer of Care  
Between Providers



Patient Summaries  
to the Emergency  
Department



EMS Transfers to the  
Hospital



CDC and Public  
Health Reporting

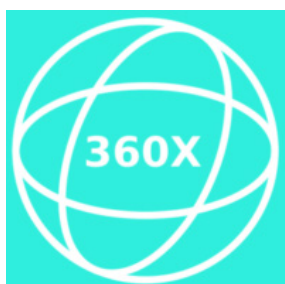


While there are dozens of possible use cases for Direct Secure Messaging in healthcare, we'll examine just three of these examples below.



### Use Case 1: Referrals

[Direct Secure Messaging](#) streamlines the referral process, reducing the administrative burden and expediting the transfer of crucial information. This enables healthcare providers to make timely and informed decisions about patient care. With Direct, structured data from one system can be seamlessly integrated into another, minimizing the need for manual data entry and enhancing the accuracy and completeness of patient records. The inclusion of a message delivery notice and a comprehensive audit trail further supports reliability and efficiency in the referral process. [Click here for more.](#)



### Use Case 2: 360X

The 360 Exchange for Closed Loop Referrals (360X) initiative addresses the challenge of fragmented communication during patient referrals. By employing [Direct Secure Messaging](#) within the Direct Standard® framework, 360X closes the loop on referrals, significantly improving communication across care transitions. This not only enhances care quality and efficiency but also reduces costs by avoiding redundant tests. The effectiveness of 360X was [showcased at a recent HIMSS Conference](#), highlighting its role in enhancing care coordination. [Click here for more.](#)



### Use Case 3: EMS Transfer

[Direct Secure Messaging](#) is particularly effective in the context of EMS transfers, where timely and secure communication is critical. Direct facilitates the rapid sharing of crucial patient information such as medical history, vital signs, and emergency details, preparing hospital staff ahead of time. This capability supports real-time communication updates, continuity of care, and compliance through digital documentation. Furthermore, it enhances security and privacy while reducing potential errors and delays, thereby improving the overall efficiency and interoperability of healthcare systems. [Click here for more.](#)

DirectTrust® is a non-profit, vendor-neutral alliance dedicated to establishing trust in a connected world. The organization serves as a forum for a consensus-driven community focused on health communication and cybersecurity, an ANSI standards development organization, an accreditation and certification body governed by EHNAC, and a developer of trust frameworks and supportive services for secure information exchange like Direct Secure Messaging and identity-verified credentials.



[Admin@DirectTrust.org](mailto:Admin@DirectTrust.org)  
[DirectTrust.org](https://DirectTrust.org)

# DIRECT SECURE MESSAGING STEPS FOR SUCCESS

Healthcare organizations are moving to Direct Secure Messaging! As easy as email or fax, Direct provides a widely deployed, more secure communication method for sensitive health information and allows data to flow directly into the EHR, saving you valuable time and resources.

Here are the top tips from those who've gained efficiency by switching to Direct:



## **Confirm your capabilities**

Check with your technology vendor to determine all of your **Direct Secure Messaging** capabilities! Direct can be used to support many workflows including referrals, transitions of care, and more.



## **Identify your Direct addresses**

Work with your technology vendor to identify any existing Direct addresses assigned to your organization. Consider optimizing Direct by creating addresses for specific purposes or departments, like referrals or admission/discharge/transfer notifications, etc.



## **Educate your team**

Teach team members how easy it is to use Direct! Make sure they understand the positive impact it will have on their workload, freeing up valuable time for patient-facing care.



## **Share your Direct address everywhere you can!**

Be sure to publish your address in national directories (like **DirectTrust** and **NPPES**). Anywhere you have your fax number, list your Direct address(es), including your website, email signature line, fax cover sheet, and even in your organization's phone greeting and prompts.



## **Talk to your partner organizations**

Let your frequent referral partners know you prefer Direct! Ask them to send patient information, referrals, requests for labs, etc. via Direct rather than other methods. Ask for their Direct address(es) to reciprocate the efficiencies you've gained to them!

**Want to learn more about how to benefit  
from your use of Direct exchange?**

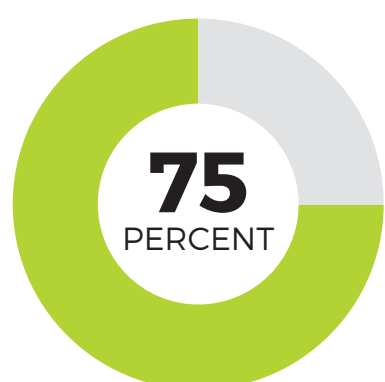
Contact your technology vendor or visit **DirectTrust.org**



# DIRECT SECURE MESSAGING IS REPLACING FAXING

## ANSWER THE CALL TO “SEND VIA DIRECT”

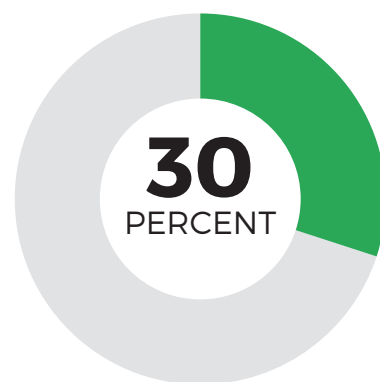
Why is healthcare the last remaining industry holding on to fax as the primary way to communicate critical information between providers about their patients? While surgeons are supported by robots in the OR and AI is finding care gaps, the sharing and administrative functions of coordinating healthcare lags decades behind.



of patient information  
is still exchanged via fax

**\$125B**

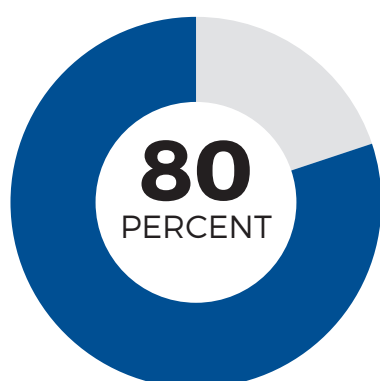
annual fax costs attributed  
to U.S. healthcare



of tests are reordered  
due to lost faxes



fax pages continue  
to be exchanged  
each year



of all serious medical  
mistakes result from  
poor communication,  
including fax



**\$2.5M**  
the largest HIPAA fine  
issued in 2017 for faxing  
to the wrong number

While both modalities push information from one location to another, secure push-based messaging in healthcare is facilitated by DirectTrust™ and is realizing nationwide interoperability with the use of **Direct Secure Messaging**, encrypted “email-like” messages with attachments. With more than 1.6 billion messages sent and received since 2014, Direct Secure Messaging is a viable and established **alternative for fax**.

## FAXING



### Retro Exchange

Faxing is no longer hip;  
CMS calls for the end of  
fax by 2020



### Unsecure

Fax machine hacks and  
paper standing on a tray  
are not secure



### Unreliable

Busy signals, lost, never  
received, and resends  
take unnecessary time  
out of the day



### No Data

Flat image with no usable  
or structured data that can  
flow into the EHR



### Inefficient

Too many labor hours  
spent printing, scanning  
and attaching documents  
to the patient chart

## DIRECT



### Modern Exchange

Direct Secure Messaging is  
HIPAA-compliant; HHS and  
ONC supported and promoted



### Secure

Utilizes the DirectTrust  
framework which requires  
identity verification



### Reliable

Accredited health  
standard specifically for  
the exchange of PHI/EHI  
with full audit trail



### Structured Data

Receive the same document  
as the fax with data that is  
easily ingested into the EHR

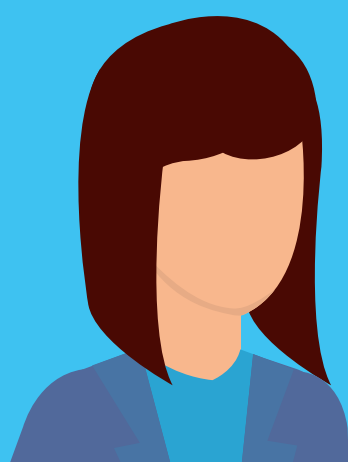


### Efficient

Save up to 70% in labor by  
electronically reconciling/  
filing PHI/EHI directly into  
the patient chart

# THE CHANGE IS SIMPLE ...

IT STARTS WITH HOW YOU ASK THE QUESTION



What's your  
fax number?

What's your  
Direct address?



**RESOURCES**  
HHS.gov Press Release: \$2.5 Million Settlement Shows that not understanding HIPAA requirements creates risk  
ReferralMD Article: 30 Healthcare Statistics That Keep Hospital Executives Up at Night  
Vox Article: The Fax of Life - Why American medicine still runs on fax machines  
ReferralMD Article: Our Healthcare Referral System is Broken - Dollars Wasted, Lives Lost  
HealthIT Security Article: Hospital Faxes Records to Wrong Person in Apparent HIPAA Violation  
EHR Intelligence Article: DirectTrust Surpasses 1 Billion Health Data Exchange Transactions  
Health IT News Article: CMS Administrator Seema Verma calls for an end of physical fax machines by 2020  
CNBC Cybersecurity Article: Hackers Could Use Fax Machines to Take Over Entire Networks, Researchers Warn

For more information on Direct Secure Messaging, visit [www.directtrust.org](http://www.directtrust.org)  
Content created in collaboration with the DirectTrust Marketing & Membership Workgroup, including DataMotion, Kno2, Secure Exchange Solutions and Surescripts  
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