Position Statement on Patient Access to Electronic Mental Health Records

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2016
Approved by the Assembly, May 2016

“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. These are position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects.” – APA Operations Manual

POSITION:
Systems that provide patients with online access to their mental health records should implement appropriate procedures and safeguards. These include:

(a) methods for ensuring that treating psychiatrists in the system are notified when patients access their records,
(b) methods for ensuring that information likely to result in harm to the patient or others will not be disclosed,
(c) methods for ensuring that information provided in confidence by third parties will not be inadvertently disclosed,
(d) methods for facilitating patients’ comprehension of disclosed information, and
(e) methods for ensuring that current inpatients may only access their records in consultation with the attending psychiatrist.

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