

Guidance for Facilities Choosing to Accept Self-referred Patients

Information provided from Federal Regulations – Policy Guidance Help System:

Does a facility have to accept self-referred patients?

Neither MQSA nor the final regulations require a facility to accept self-referred patients (facilities should check their obligations under their State requirements). However, if a facility does accept self-referred patients, it must send both the mammography report and a lay summary to the patient. It must also have a system to refer such patients to a health care provider when clinically indicated.

What is the difference between self-referred and self-requesting patients and how does this affect what types of reports these patients receive?

Self-referred patients are those who come for mammography, but have no health care provider, or who decline a health care provider, or for whom the provider declines responsibility. Such patients shall receive the written mammography report, in addition to a summary of the report written in lay terms. This would enable self-referred patients to give their new physician their latest mammogram results, when they acquire a primary care doctor. Self-referred patients with abnormal results need to be able to show their new primary care physician exactly what is wrong with their mammogram, along with recommendations made by the physician who interpreted it.

Please note that patients who come to a facility without a health care provider, but are willing to accept a health care provider recommended by the facility and understand that their mammogram reports will be sent to that provider, are no longer to be considered self-referred. Instead, they should be treated like referred patients with respect to communication of results. In some cases, the radiologist can also act as the referring physician, as long as he/she accepts responsibility for the patient's medical care, and this arrangement is acceptable to the patient.

Self-requesting patients are those who come for mammography on their own initiative, but are able to name a health care provider (or accept a health care provider offered by the facility) who accepts responsibility for that patient's clinical breast care. Such patients should receive the same communication of results as referred patients. Please note that in the event that the health care provider declines to accept the mammography report from the facility, the latter should treat the patient as if she were self-referred.

State of Iowa Rules regarding self referred patients

41.6(4) *Obtaining and preserving records.*

- d. Communication of results to the patient. Each facility shall maintain a system to ensure that the results of each mammographic examination are communicated in lay terms to each patient in a time period not to exceed 30 days from the date of the mammography examination. If assessments are "Suspicious" or "Highly suggestive of malignancy" and the patient has not named a health care provider, the facility shall make reasonable attempts to ensure that the results are communicated to the patient as soon as possible.
- (1) As soon as possible, but no later than 30 days from the date of the mammography examination, patients who do not name a health care provider to receive the mammography report shall be sent the report described in 41.6(4)"e"(1) in addition to a written notification of results in lay terms.
 - (2) Each facility that accepts patients who do not have a primary care provider shall maintain a system for referring such patients to a health care provider when clinically indicated.