

Request for Proposals

Deadline:

June 8, 2017, at 1 p.m.

Spreading OpenNotes in New York State

Applicants must submit an online proposal. The online application and instructions are posted in the [Grant Seekers/Open RFPs section](#) of the NYSHealth website. Applications must be completed and submitted by **Thursday, June 8, 2017, at 1 p.m.**

I. About the Foundation

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) is a private foundation dedicated to improving the health of all New Yorkers, especially the most vulnerable. To achieve meaningful impact, the Foundation makes grants, informs health care policy and practice, and spreads effective programs that work to improve New York's health system. Most of the Foundation's grantmaking is focused on two priority areas: building healthy communities and empowering health care consumers.

II. Background

New Yorkers often find the health care system incredibly complex to understand and navigate. Information about prices and quality is opaque. The system is often unresponsive to consumers' needs and preferences, and patients are not engaged in shared decision-making with their health care providers. Patients are sometimes denied access to their own health care information. Even when people are well, the system is daunting and confusing. In times of sickness or crisis, the hurdles can be overwhelming, and the consequences on health and financial security can be huge. Too often, consumers and patients are marginalized, rather than placed at the center of the health care system and treated as its most important customers. Instead, the interests of providers, payers, and other organized stakeholders take precedence over the patient in many cases.

[OpenNotes](#) is a national movement to give patients access to their own visit notes written by their doctors, nurses, or other clinicians. OpenNotes is neither a health information technology nor a specific model but rather a process change where physicians give patients access to their visit notes through a patient portal or by simply printing them out. Established in 2010 at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, OpenNotes spurs real patient engagement by giving patients and their caregivers access to the clinical notes written by health care providers. When patients have such access, they better remember what was discussed during the visit and are more likely to take medications as prescribed and follow the recommended treatment plan. Studies show that OpenNotes enhances patient care without burdening physicians and that patients want to see their notes:

- Up to 92% of patients in an OpenNotes study opened their notes;
- More than 60% of patients reported improvements with taking medications as prescribed;
- More than 77% of patients reported that OpenNotes helped them feel more in control of their care;

- More than 86% of patients agreed that OpenNotes would be an important factor in choosing a future doctor or health plan;
- Fewer than 8% of doctors reported taking more time to address patients' questions outside of visits;
- Fewer than 20% of doctors reported taking more time to write notes;
- In cases where patients identified notes as having patient safety-related mistakes, 57% of cases resulted in a change to the record or care, suggesting that OpenNotes is an effective tool for engaging patients as patient-safety partners; and
- 99% of patients wanted OpenNotes to continue.

Nationally, 62 hospital and health care providers across 36 states currently use OpenNotes. However, uptake in New York State has been slow. Only five hospital systems in the State have implemented OpenNotes or another type of shared notes program, two of which are funded by NYSHealth: [NYC Health + Hospitals](#) and [NewYork Quality Care](#).

III. New York State Health Foundation Perspective

Through its [Empowering Health Care Consumers](#) priority area, the Foundation is specifically focused on work that increases and enhances consumers' and patients' choice and control.

The Foundation's focus on control provides the framework for this Request for Proposals (RFP). Patients want to have more control over their care but often lack the information they need to do so. Few health care systems use tools that help patients and providers make treatment choices together that reflect patients' own needs and preferences or provide patients with access to appointment visit summaries, physician notes, and full medical records. True consumer empowerment begins when patients have access to the information they need to talk to their health care providers, share information, and develop a trusted relationship. OpenNotes is an important step in achieving the goal of consumers being active participants in their own care.

Through this RFP, the Foundation aims to foster the spread of OpenNotes to more New York State hospitals and patients. The hospitals awarded these grants will not only become leaders in patient-centered care, but also help create the critical mass and momentum needed to activate additional participation by providers who can spur culture change across the sector.

IV. The Funding Opportunity

NYSHealth will award grants of up to \$100,000 to up to 10 hospitals in New York State interested in implementing OpenNotes at their facilities. Applicants with a clear commitment to the mission of OpenNotes that are willing to engage in creative strategies to ensure patient uptake will be favorably considered. Awardees will receive ongoing technical support from the OpenNotes team during their implementation process.

Proposals are required to include the following:

- The scale of the project and the number of patients who will receive access to their notes.

- Demonstrated support of clinical leadership and senior management of the facility.
- In-kind contributions by the hospital in the form of financial support and/or staff resources.
- A detailed implementation plan and timeline (including how many providers will participate, which department(s) will participate, and who will lead the implementation).
- Plan to produce a white paper or case study documenting the experience implementing OpenNotes and a strategy to publicly share the project results and lessons learned.

V. Review Criteria

This RFP is open to any hospital in New York State interested in implementing OpenNotes. Proposals from hospitals that include the following factors will be the most competitive during the review process:

- Serve vulnerable populations;
- Reach large numbers of patients through an OpenNotes implementation;
- Employ an opt-out model so that the default is for physicians to share notes with patients; and
- Demonstrate creative ways to deliver notes to patients.

Grants of up to \$100,000 may not fully cover the implementation costs at a particular hospital, given the staff support, training, education, and patient marketing needed for success; however, cost will vary depending on the size of the hospital's pilot. Applicants should make some level of in-kind financial investment in implementing OpenNotes within their facilities. Applicants that do so will be favorably considered in the selection process.

Project durations may vary depending on the readiness and size of the organization and implementation plan, but should be a maximum of two years. The Foundation expects implementation to be well underway by the end of the grant period with patients accessing their notes.

Proposals will be assessed by both Foundation staff and a panel of external reviewers.

NOTE: Hospitals that have already implemented OpenNotes in a limited way or are in the process of implementing it or another type of shared notes program may be eligible to apply. Please e-mail OpenNotesRFP@NYSHHealth.org for inquiries about eligibility.

VI. Application Process

The deadline for proposals is **Thursday, June 8th at 1 p.m.**, with proposals submitted through NYSHealth's online application system. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications by late August 2017.

Programmatic questions about this funding opportunity should be e-mailed to OpenNotesRFP@NYSHHealth.org.

Technical questions regarding the online application system should be e-mailed to grantsmanagement@NYSHHealth.org.