



Improving the state of
New York's health.

April 2019

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Request for Proposals

Deadline:
May 16, 2019, at 1 p.m..

Growing OpenNotes Across New York State

Applicants must submit an online proposal. The online application and instructions are posted in the [Apply for Funding section](#) of the NYSHealth website. Applications must be completed and submitted by Thursday, May 16, 2019, at 1 p.m.

I. About the Foundation

The New York State Health Foundation (NYSHealth) has a broad mission to improve the health of New York State residents, 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. The Foundation's grantmaking is focused on two priority areas: Building Healthy Communities and Empowering Health Care Consumers. It also engages in responsive grantmaking through its Special Projects Fund and maintains a special interest in Veterans' Health.

II. Background

New Yorkers find that the health care system can be unresponsive to their needs and preferences. 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. Empowering health care consumers includes ensuring that they are engaged in shared decision-making with their health care providers and have the tools and information to control and actively participate in their own care.

[OpenNotes](#) is a national effort to give patients access to the visit notes written by their doctors, nurses, or other clinicians. Established in 2010, OpenNotes creates partnerships toward better health and health care by giving everyone on the medical team, including the patient, access to the same information. After a doctor visit, patients often forget their doctor's advice or get it wrong, in part because of the amount of information a patient is provided with during a visit. Studies show that patients generally remember only 40% of what is said in a doctor's office, and half of that is quickly forgotten. When patients have access to their notes, they better remember what was discussed during the visit; feel more in control of their care; are more likely to take medications as prescribed; and can share notes with their caregivers. This in turn better equips patients to stay up to date with visits and helps them enact the recommended treatment plan.

NYSHealth Request for Proposals—Growing OpenNotes Across New York State

Studies have found OpenNotes to be effective:

- 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.

Although more than 37 million Americans currently have access to their notes, uptake in New York State has been slow, which NYSHealth has sought to address. In 2017, NYSHealth issued a statewide Request for Proposals (RFP) to accelerate the spread of OpenNotes to more New York State hospitals and patients. To date, NYSHealth has supported 10 geographically dispersed hospital systems to implement OpenNotes. These hospital systems are also part of a New York State OpenNotes Collaborative, jointly sponsored by OpenNotes and NYSHealth. The Collaborative receives technical assistance from OpenNotes and meets quarterly to inform and learn from each other, highlight unique initiatives, and discuss potential barriers to and successful strategies for implementation.

Our cohort of OpenNotes grantees has made great strides in engaging and sharing notes with thousands of patients and pushed boundaries by piloting innovative projects. [NYC Health + Hospitals](#) implemented OpenNotes across all specialties (except behavioral health) at three hospitals in its network, with a fivefold increase in notes viewed. The [University of Rochester Medical Center](#) and [Rochester Regional Health](#)—the two biggest health systems in the area—have formed a partnership that brought OpenNotes to Rochester.

NYSHealth continues to invest in OpenNotes. To ensure that all New Yorkers are able to have access to their own health information, OpenNotes must be spread to all settings in which patients receive care, especially in underserved communities. For example, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) are vital and significant providers of comprehensive health care services in underserved areas of both urban and rural communities. However, uptake of OpenNotes by FQHCs and other provider practices has been especially slow—only three FQHCs in California and one large FQHC network in Oregon have implemented OpenNotes. The need to spread OpenNotes to FQHCs and other health care settings, including multispecialty group practices, hospital-affiliated physician groups, and independent physician practices, is critical to making OpenNotes available to all New Yorkers.

III. Foundation Perspective

Through its [Empowering Health Care Consumers](#) priority area, the Foundation is specifically focused on work that promotes greater information transparency and engages with patients as partners.

The Foundation's focus on patients as partners provides the framework for this RFP. Patients want to partner in their care but often lack the information they need to do so. This RFP directly supports NYSHealth's interest in empowering consumers by **(1)** providing them with information to make informed choices about their own health and health care, **(2)** promoting access to their own personal health information, and **(3)** equipping them with tools and resources to have greater control over their own health.

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 further the spread of OpenNotes to FQHCs, multispecialty group practices, hospital-affiliated physician groups, independent physician practices, and other health care settings across New York State so that more patients—regardless of provider setting—will have access to their own notes. Awardees will not only advance patient-centered care, but also help create the critical mass and momentum needed to catalyze additional participation that can spur culture change across the sectors—among both NYSHealth grantees and other organizations.

IV. Funding Opportunity

NYSHealth will award grants of up to \$100,000 per organization in New York State interested in

implementing OpenNotes at its facilities. See next section for eligibility requirements. 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 be required to produce a white paper or case study documenting their experiences with OpenNotes and to publicly share the project results and lessons learned.

Proposals are required to include the following:

- A focus on vulnerable patient populations, such as low-income individuals and elderly New Yorkers;
- The scale of the project and the number of patients who will receive access to OpenNotes;
- In-kind contributions by the applicant in the form of financial support and/or staff resources;
- Demonstrated support of clinical leadership; and
- Demonstrated support by the facility's senior management.

V. Review Criteria

This RFP is open to any **FQHC, multispecialty group practice, hospital-affiliated physician group, and independent physician practice in New York State** interested in implementing OpenNotes. Proposals 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.

NYSHealth is committed to funding a diverse cohort of projects in communities throughout New York State.

Grants of up to \$100,000 may not fully cover the implementation costs at a selected provider setting, given the staff support, training, education, and patient marketing needed for success. We seek to stretch our limited resources to as many provider settings as we can, and aim to award grants that are

sufficiently large so as to be enticing and serve as a catalyst for applicants. We will expect better-resourced applicants to make some level of financial investment in implementing OpenNotes within their facilities.

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: FQHCs, multispecialty group practices, hospital-affiliated physician groups, and independent physician practices 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. NYSHealth-supported initiatives to spread OpenNotes at hospital systems throughout the State are already underway; hospitals will not be eligible for funding through this RFP. Please e-mail OpenNotesRFP@NYSHealth.org for inquiries about eligibility.

VI. Application Process

The deadline for proposals is May 16th 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 July 2019.

Programmatic questions about this funding opportunity should be e-mailed to OpenNotesRFP@NYSHealth.org. Technical questions regarding the online application system should be e-mailed to Grants Assisant Elena Pereira at Pereira@NYSHealth.org.