Provider Guide

I. Electronic Records Express–Submitting Health and School Records Online or by Fax

If you need to provide health or school records to Social Security or the state Disability Determination Services (DDS) on behalf of clients, patients or students filing disability claims, you will want to consider sending the records online via Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website or by fax. Submitting records online or by fax is more efficient and timely, and can result in a quicker decision for the disability applicant.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) does not restrict electronic alternatives for transferring health or school records and indeed encourages such technological efficiencies. Similarly, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) does not restrict electronic alternatives for transferring school records.

Social Security would like to obtain health and school records from you electronically if at all possible. However, recognizing that health and educational providers have a wide range of capabilities and needs, health and school records are accepted in electronic or paper formats.

II. Options for Sending Health or School Records

1. Electronic Records Express Options – Online and Fax

You can send your patient or student records to Social Security through any of the following methods. Records received online or by fax provide faster disability decisions, convenience and security, and lower costs.

If your health or school records are:		Then you can:
Electronic	**Paper**	
	✓	Scan, then send records online via Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website
✓		Send records online via Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website
✓		Send individual patient health records or student school records
✓		Send multiple patient health records or student school records
✓		Send consultative exam report(s)
✓	✓	Fax records to Social Security or DDS

2. Other Electronic Option –Secure Bulk File Transfer

This option is for high volume providers. It allows you to transfer records in an automated machine-to-machine mode. This option requires commercial software and is not free of charge.

If your health or school records are:		Then you can:
Electronic	**Paper**	
✓		Use CONNECT:Direct (for high volume providers).

3. Paper Options

We would like to obtain health and school records from you online or by fax if at all possible. However, health and school records are accepted in paper formats.

If your health or school records are:		Then you can:
Electronic	**Paper**	
	✓	Mail to Social Security's regional scanning facility
	✓	Mail to Social Security or DDS

Each method is explained below in greater detail.

III.   If You Have Paper Health or School Records

1. Scan

You may scan paper health or school records to create an electronic file which can then be easily transmitted to Social Security or DDS using Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website to safely upload your files. Many all-in-one copiers and printers have the capability to scan paper documents to create an electronic file. When using the scanning option, the health or school records request letter from the DDS **must** be scanned as page one of your patient's newly-created electronic file.

2. Fax

You can easily fax health or school records to Social Security or the state DDS by programming the toll-free fax number shown on the health or school records request letter into your fax machine and then sending the information quickly and safely. Fax transmission of health and school information is permitted by HIPAA and FERPA privacy rules. Please note that the records request letter **must** be used as your fax cover sheet, so that your patient's or student's records can be associated with the correct, unique electronic disability folder.

2. Mail

You can still mail records directly to the address shown on the DDS health or school records request letter. This can be a time-consuming (labor required to photocopy records and prepare them for mailing) and costly (postage fees) process, so Social Security encourages providers to send records through Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website or by fax whenever possible. Health or school records requests will direct you to send patient or student records either directly to the DDS or to a regional scanning facility. Please respond to the address shown on the specific request letter. Upon receiving paper health or school records, staff will digitally scan and index these records for inclusion in the applicant's unique electronic disability folder.

IV.   If You Have Electronic Health or School Records

1. Electronic Records Express – Secure Website option
If you can create an electronic record by scanning paper records or extracting part of a patient's or student's electronic record, you can use Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website to safely upload your files. This service is free to providers who have access to the Internet. Only authorized users can access the secure website by using their assigned user ID and password. Contact the Professional Relations Officer in your state's DDS to get started.

Social Security encrypts or encodes all transmissions of protected health and school information received through the Electronic Records Express secure website. When using the Electronic Records Express secure website, you can send individual patient records or individual student records, or use the website's option to send bulk or grouped health or school records (for many different patients or students).

2. Electronic Records Express – Fax option
Some software systems permit providers to send an electronic file directly to a fax "gateway" without first printing the file. When using a fax gateway transmission, you **must** be able to scan the barcode from the health or school records request letter as page one of the file being faxed. Social Security needs the barcode information in order to associate your fax gateway transmission to the applicant's unique electronic disability folder.

3. Other electronic option – Bulk Transport Process
For providers that handle a high volume of Social Security requests, Social Security is prepared to accept files using CONNECT:Direct. CONNECT:Direct is a leading tool in the industry for electronic data interchange. Your state Professional Relations Officer can provide you with more information about acquiring and using CONNECT:Direct. CONNECT:Direct requires commercial software and is not free of charge.

V. What Do You Need To Use Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website?

To use the Electronic Records Express secure website, you only need:

✓ Internet access

✓ A Web browser

✓ A computer that supports an encryption level of 128-bits (most computers purchased in the last five years support 128-bit encryption)

✓ A user ID and password to access the Electronic Records Express secure website (your state Professional Relations Officer will assist you with the registration process)

No special software is required to use the Electronic Records Express secure website.

VI. How Do You Send Records Using Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website?

First, contact your state Professional Relations Officer to obtain a Username and Password to access the Electronic Records Express secure website.

Next, you should have an existing electronic patient or student record and you know where it is stored on your computer system (i.e., which drive, which folders, etc.). The Electronic Records Express secure website accepts the following types of electronic files: .doc, .wpd, .zip, .jpg, .bmp, .txt, .xls, .pdf, .tiff and .tif. The website accepts the following types of characters as names for the patients' or students' files: numbers, letters, hyphens/dashes, underscores, backslashes and spaces.

You also will need to have the DDS request letter with you because you will need to enter information such as the patient's or student's Social Security Number and the Request ID. This information ensures that your patients' or students' records are properly transmitted to their unique electronic disability folder.

VII. How Do You Send Records Using Social Security's Electronic Records Express secure website?

You can access the full, 138-page PDF version of the "Provider Guide for Electronic Records Express"