

MYTH: Every provider and payer provides patient records electronically through Blue Button.

FACT: Though Blue Button's reach is growing, not all health care entities currently use it.

Blue Button was originally created by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to improve veterans' access to their medical records. Since then, it has expanded to multiple other organizations including providers, laboratories, and payers. Under ownership of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Blue Button can also be accessed by individuals enrolled in Medicare.

Through customizable interfaces, consumers can access their medical records via Blue Button in ways that are meaningful to them. For example, veterans access Blue Button on the MyHealthVet website. Information that is available to the consumer is largely dependent on the route through which they access Blue Button. The same information that is available to Medicare recipients may not be available to veterans or individuals requesting records through a laboratory, for example.

In addition to the VHA and Medicare, there are private providers, laboratories, and insurers that also provide access to records through Blue Button. Health care providers are required to share health records when properly requested by a consumer. A provider or payer is required to provide an individual's health information in the electronic format requested if the information is readily producible in that format and it meets the organization's security requirements. Organizations

may implement the Consolidated Clinical Document Architecture (CCDA) format, which is compatible with Blue Button. However, providers that do not use Blue Button may not yet have the capability to export electronic information in a compatible format.

Although Blue Button's popularity is growing, it is not the sole source of electronic information sharing. As more electronic health records improve their interoperability capabilities, users can expect to be able to consolidate information from more sources. Consumers can verify that their information is being shared through Blue Button by looking for the company's service mark and checking the Blue Button Connector [website](#).

For More Information:

- [Listen](#) to our interview with Dr. Mehret Mandefro, who speaks about Blue Button
- [Read](#) our Fast Facts on Blue Button
- [See](#) if you can use Blue Button through the Blue Button Connector

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