

Break the Glass Emergency Access Frequently Asked Questions

“Break the Glass” emergency access allows users to access protected health information (PHI) in the health information exchange (HIE) without the patient’s consent, but only in the event of an emergency situation. To learn more about what Break the Glass means and whether your organization is eligible to use it, review the questions below. For further explanations or to discuss with a Customer Engagement Specialist, please call 315-671-2241 ext. 5 or email support@healthconnections.org.

Question: Does my organization need Break the Glass access?

Answer: Does your organization manage emergency medical situations? If the answer is no, then we recommend your users not have Break the Glass access.

Question: What constitutes a medical emergency?

Answer: A provider can only Break the Glass to access a patient record in the case of an incident that requires emergency treatment. In accordance to Public Health Law Section 2504(4)+, the provider determines, in his or her reasonable judgment, that information that may be held by or accessible through the HIE may be material to emergency treatment.

Question: What is the criteria a user needs to have Break the Glass access?

Answer: By New York State Department of Health policy, anyone breaking the glass must meet the following criteria:

1. The patient is in immediate need of medical attention and an attempt to secure an affirmative consent would result in delay of treatment which would increase the risk to the patient’s life or health.
2. The Practitioner or EMT determines that information in the HIE may be material to emergency treatment.
3. In addition, the user must be a licensed practitioner or EMT, or acting under the immediate direction of a licensed practitioner to Break the Glass.

Question: Is Break the Glass activity audited?

Answer: Yes, anytime a user Breaks the Glass, that access will be audited and reported to New York State.

Question: Who determines who can have Break the Glass access?

Answer: The only individual(s) at an organization authorized to determine whether Break the Glass is necessary is a RHIO Administrator.



Question: If the RHIO Administrator believes Break the Glass access is necessary, what should they do?

Answer: The RHIO Administrator should reach out to their Community Engagement Specialist or HealthConnections Support (support@healthconnections.org or 315-671-2241 ext. 5) and identify the users that should have this privilege.

Question: Can I currently see who has access to Break the Glass at my organization?

Answer: Yes, if you have access to the HIE Usage Dashboard in MyConnections for your organization, you can see who at your organization has Break the Glass access.

Question: How do I view my staff in the HIE Usage Dashboard?

Answer: Click on the blue 'CSV Export' button and select the 'Staff Breakdown' report in the dropdown. In this view of the report you'll see a breakdown of your Authorized Users and which of those users have the Break the Glass functionality.

Question: If I have any further questions what should I do?

Answer: A RHIO Administrator should reach out to your Community Engagement Specialist or HealthConnections Support (support@healthconnections.org or 315-671-2241 ext. 5)