Patient Portal FAQ

To see more frequently asked questions about Southern Tier HealthLink, click here.

What is the Southern Tier HealthLink Patient Portal?
The Southern Tier HealthLink (STHL) Patient Portal is a secure site where patients can interact with the STHL Health Information Exchange. You can:

- Manage Your Consent & Share Data with your Doctors
- Access Your Providers & Your Health Information
- Monitor Who is Accessing Your Information

Why should I set up an account?
You must set up an account with your contact information before you can set your consent preferences, access your health information (also requires a Microsoft HealthVault™ account), and monitor which health care providers have accessed your records.

How do I create an account?
You can create a new account by following the STHL Patient Portal link from www.sthlny.com and clicking the Register a New User link on the login screen. You will be asked for contact information, including an email account. You will receive confirmation of your new account by email.

Why was I asked for personal information while setting up a new account?
STHL asks for personal information, including birth date, address, phone number and the last four digits of the social security number in order to properly identify you in your request for an account. This information helps us make certain that your private health information remains secure. We do not share this information with any third party.

Why can't I use a shared email account when setting up a new account?
STHL requires that each STHL Patient Portal account be tied to a unique email address in order to protect against a person, other than the account holder, from receiving account information like usernames and passwords. This measure is geared to protect your privacy.

What software/hardware do I need to access the STHL Patient Portal?
At this time, the STHL Patient Portal requires Internet Explorer. Internet Explorer 9 and below are currently supported.

What are the password guidelines?
STHL follows Federal guidelines regarding passwords. Because of the sensitivity and security of your Health Information Records, the STHL Patient Portal password strength is required to be rated "better" at minimum, meaning it must meet 3 of these 5 characteristics:

- Have 7 or more characters in length
- Have 12 or more characters in length
- Contain both uppercase and lowercase letters
- Contain at least one number (0-9)
- Contain at least one non-alphanumeric character (for example: !,@ # \ and &)

For example, **MyStreet45** and **Fluffy!** both work.

How do I choose which doctors to allow access to my health information?
To select the health care providers that you want to have access to your information electronically, go to the Manage My Consent page. After accepting the Terms and Conditions, you can choose which health care providers can access your medical information. New York sets consent per "legal entity"; this can include an entire practice, medical group, or hospital that is allowed to share patients' health information internally under terms of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

You have three consent choices for each legal entity.

> **Permit:** Allows health care providers within the legal entity access to your electronic health information through Southern Tier HealthLink.

> **Deny:** Prohibits health care providers within the legal entity access to your electronic health information through Southern Tier HealthLink, even in a medical emergency.

> **Unspecified:** Allows health care providers within the legal entity access to your electronic health information through Southern Tier HealthLink **ONLY in a medical emergency**.

Can I set consent for all of my providers at one time?
Yes. Use the drop down menu next to "Update all listed Legal Entities with" to select your choice. Your choice will apply to all entities on the list.

What if I can't find my physician's name listed under "Manage My Consent"?
The Manage My Consent page lists legal entities, which may be made up of one or more physician, medical practice or group, or hospital. You can use the search function to locate which legal entity your medical practice is part of.

However, not all health care providers are connected to STHL yet. You can see an updated list of organizations participating in Southern Tier HealthLink here. If you have any questions about when your health care provider will be connected, you may contact STHL at 607.651.9150 or info@sthlny.com.

How do I learn which providers have accessed my records?
Click on the tab titled "Access My Reports" in the left hand navigation bar of the STHL Patient Portal. Two different reports are available. The Audit Report lists all times your record has been accessed (and by whom) through the STHL HIE Web Portal, a secure internet tool for authorized health care providers. The Clinical Summary Data Exchange Report lists all times your record was securely accessed through a connected electronic record system.

How do I know my information is secure?
Southern Tier HealthLink uses role-based security with the most advanced information safeguards available. Encryption, password protection, the ability to track every viewer and other safeguards protect against unauthorized use of the exchange. Setting up your account helps STHL to identify you and maintain your privacy. Your information will not be shared with any third party.

Patients can request a report of who has accessed their records (Access My Reports). If unauthorized access does occur, STHL is required to investigate, remediate, report it to everyone affected, and take all steps necessary to ensure that such access does not happen again.

Why should I set up a Microsoft HealthVault™ account?
Southern Tier HealthLink uses a Microsoft HealthVault™ application to allow you to access your electronic health information stored in the STHL health information exchange. You can create a Microsoft HealthVault™ account for free here, and link it to your STHL Patient Portal account to view your medical information. Microsoft HealthVault™ offers several useful health-related tools that you may be interested in. Please read and understand the privacy statement and terms of use for Microsoft HealthVault™.

What can I do with a Microsoft HealthVault™ account?
Here are some of the benefits of linking your Microsoft HealthVault™ account to your STHL Patient Portal account.
- Manage your health-related information.
- Consolidate information that may be scattered across the record systems of the many doctor's offices and hospitals you visit. Click here to see a list of participating providers.
- Includes details about allergies, encounters, medications, problems, procedures and insurance information.
- Valuable in the case of an emergency.

Why should I set up a myUHS account?
You may be interested in the online services available through myUHS. You can reach the login screen for myUHS through the STHL Patient Portal on the myUHS tab.

What about patients who are minors?
STHL is not currently offering STHL Patient Portal accounts to minors.

Why can't I find my lab results, physician notes and radiology images in my STHL/HealthVault account?
Under current New York law, these pieces of information must be disclosed to patients directly by the ordering physician. As a patient you have the right to request this information from your healthcare provider. In addition, many healthcare providers offer Personal Healthcare Records which have the capability to share your lab results with you directly.