

How to Upload HCAI Patient-Level Administrative Data (SIERA) into the Hospital Quality Improvement Platform

Background:

To explore recent (same year) quality performance for your hospital, you can upload California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) System of Integrated Electronic Reporting and Auditing ([SIERA](#)) Patient-Level Administrative Data data directly into the Hospital Quality Improvement Platform ([HQIP](#)).

Per [California statute](#), your hospital *already* uploads SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data to HCAI [biannually](#) for inpatient discharges and [quarterly](#) for emergency department and ambulatory surgery discharges. HCAI aggregates the SIERA files by calendar year and provides free to all California hospitals statewide [Limited Data Sets](#) (formerly called the AB2876 data sets) containing ALL inpatient, emergency department, and ambulatory (3 files) discharges around August of the *following* calendar year.

The instructions in this document tell you how to locate and securely upload SIERA files into the [HQIP](#) system so you can compare your hospital’s quality performance to that for peer hospitals. This allows you to see your hospital's performance 8 to 20 months before HCAI releases the statewide [Limited Data Sets](#).

Before you Start:

1. Identify the person or group who submits the SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data for your hospital to HCAI. This is typically an employee at the hospital or system level, but may be a vendor acting as a [designated agent](#). Because hospitals are required to submit [many different types of data](#) to HCAI (e.g., facility utilization and financial data are also reported), it is important to specifically identify the person/group that submits the “[Patient-Level Administrative Data \(SIERA\)](#)” to HCAI. Frequently this group/person works in one of the following areas of the hospital: medical records, utilization review, or compliance.
2. The person or group who submits your hospital’s SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data generates a *minimum* of 10 files per calendar year. The following table shows the SIERA reporting schedule to indicate how many files can be identified and uploaded into the HQI platform. The first time your hospital uploads data, the simplest way to communicate which SIERA files you need uploaded is to tell this person/group:
 - a. **If the current month is January-July:** “We need to upload all SIERA inpatient, emergency department, and ambulatory surgery Patient-Level Administrative Data created since January of *last* year now and then all new files from now on when they are submitted to HCAI.”
 - b. **If the Current Month is August-December:** “We need to upload all SIERA inpatient, emergency department, and ambulatory surgery Patient-Level Administrative Data created since January of *this* year now and then all new files from now on when they are submitted to HCAI.”

SIERA File Type	HCAI	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug [†]	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inpatient (IP)	Report period	Jan 1–Jun 30						Jul 1–Dec 31					
	Due date	Sep 30 of the <i>same year</i>						Mar 31 of the <i>following year</i>					
Emergency Department (ED)	Report period	Jan 1–Mar 31			Apr 1–Jun 30			Jul 1–Sep 30			Oct 1–Dec 31		
	Due date	May 15 of the <i>same year</i>			Aug 14 of the <i>same year</i>			Nov 14 of the <i>same year</i>			Feb 14 of the <i>following year</i>		
Ambulatory Surgery (AS)	Report period	Jan 1–Mar 31			Apr 1–Jun 30			Jul 1–Sep 30			Oct 1–Dec 31		
	Due date	May 15 of the <i>same year</i>			Aug 14 of the <i>same year</i>			Nov 14 of the <i>same year</i>			Feb 14 of the <i>following year</i>		

[†]HCAI aggregates SIERA files and releases statewide [Limited Data Sets](#) around August of the *following* calendar year. Rev. 03292022

If this person or group asks you what “format” the SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data need to be in, tell them: “The files should follow the same format and file specifications used for online SIERA transmission per the HCAI specifications for [IP Data](#) or [ED/AS Data](#) required at the time.”

If this person or group asks you what “file type” the SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data need to be in, tell them that: “Per the HCAI specifications for [IP Data](#) or [ED/AS Data](#), the files should be fixed ASCII text files with a “.txt” extension (or if zipped, a “.zip” extension). Only files with those extensions can be uploaded.”

Naming Convention: If possible, please request that the files follow the specific naming convention of: “**FileType_Year_Quarter**” (e.g., **ED_2022_Q3.txt** for an emergency department file covering the first quarter of 2022 or **IP_2022_Q1_Q2.txt** for an inpatient file covering the first two quarters of 2022).

Your SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data can be uploaded directly into the [HQIP system](#), which encrypts the files during the upload. The person who will actually upload the SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data into the HQI platform must have an HQIP account. If you need an account to be created for yourself or a different the uploader, email HQIAnalytics@HQInstitute.org with their name, hospital, and email address, and we will make their account the same day. They will receive an invitation email requesting them to log into the [HQIP system](#). For uploaders who handle multiple hospitals, [SFTP](#) is also an option. If you have any questions, email us at HQIAnalytics@HQInstitute.org.

Uploading Instructions:

1. Log in to the [HQIP system](#) from a computer with access to the SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data files to be uploaded. Once you are logged in, click on the upload arrow icon on the left-hand panel to get to the [Data Upload page](#).

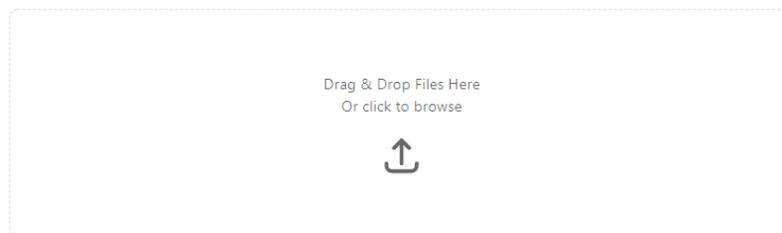


Data Upload
+ New Upload

On this page you can upload California Department of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI) System of Integrated Electronic Reporting and Auditing (SIERA) discharge data and statewide patient-level [Limited Data Sets](#) (formerly called the AB2876 data sets) directly into the Hospital Quality Improvement Platform (HQIP).

Per California statute, your hospital already submits SIERA files to HCAI [biannually](#) for inpatient discharges, and [quarterly](#) for emergency department and ambulatory surgery discharges. HCAI aggregates these SIERA files for each calendar year and makes available to all California hospitals statewide patient-level [Limited Data Sets](#) (formerly called the AB2876 data sets) containing inpatient, emergency department, and ambulatory (3 files) discharges around August of the following calendar year. The following table shows the HCAI SIERA reporting schedule to indicate how many files can be identified and uploaded into the HQI platform.

To get started, click the box below. Additional information about obtaining and uploading these data can be found [here](#).



2. You can Drag & Drop the SIERA Patient-Level Administrative Data files to the Drag & Drop box or Click the box to Browse for the files. **You can upload multiple files of the same type (i.e., IP, ED, AS) at the same time.**

3. After you locate and select the files to upload, you will be taken to the next page where you must indicate the **file type** [i.e., inpatient (IP), emergency department (ED), or ambulatory surgery (AS)].

The screenshot displays the 'Data Upload' interface with a '+ New Upload' button. It features three separate upload forms, each with a 'File' input field and a 'Data Source' dropdown menu. A red arrow points from the 'Data Source' dropdown of the first form to a larger, detailed view of the dropdown menu. This menu lists four options: 'NHSN (version 1)', 'SIERA/MIRCAL Ambulatory Surgery (version 2.0)' (highlighted with a red box), 'SIERA/MIRCAL Emergency Department (version 2.0)', and 'SIERA/MIRCAL In-Patient (version 4.1)'. Below the menu view, the three upload forms are shown again, but now with their 'Data Source' dropdowns selected and corresponding 'Validating...' progress bars at the bottom of each form.

4. After selecting the file type, click the **Upload File** button under each file. You will see the status update in real time. If the file gets stuck in "**Validating**" or have any other problems or questions, contact us at HQIAalytics@HQInstitute.org.