

Text Content Display Issue in OfficeEMR

Last Modified on 04/04/2025 7:36 pm EDT

Problem:

My SOAP Notes/Other Text Content is Displaying as Unexpected Characters or Symbols

Issue Explanation & Summary

We understand how critical it is for your documentation to appear as intended and function seamlessly within our system. While our EMR is designed to handle a wide range of data, copy-pasting content from external sources—or creating content in OfficeEMR using unsupported browsers—can sometimes lead to display inconsistencies. These issues typically arise due to differences in how external systems encode their data, which may not always align with the supported standards of our Chrome browser interface.

Our team works hard to accommodate as many scenarios as possible, but with countless variations in how external systems and browsers structure their content, it's simply not feasible to account for every possibility without impacting the system's flexibility and efficiency. For instance, one way to fully prevent these issues would be to restrict copy-pasting of external content altogether. However, this approach would significantly disrupt workflows and create additional frustrations for users. We aim to balance system flexibility with reliability, enabling you to work efficiently and addressing those challenges that are practical to handle.

It's also important to note that display issues caused by encoding do not alter the actual text data stored in our system. For example, if you copy-paste "this is the patient's medication" and it displays with unexpected icons or formatting issues onscreen, the raw text stored in the database will still accurately read as "this is the patient's medication." This is because the database saves the raw text as-is, without attempting to interpret or render any hidden formatting. However, when displaying this text on the screen, the system must render it visually, which is where issues can arise from the original encoding.

That is also why the content typically prints correctly, as encoded data is processed more uniformly during the printing process. When content is printed, the system processes the raw text data stored in the database and converts it into a format specifically designed for printing. This process often bypasses the complexities of rendering the text for a web-based interface, where there is a high likelihood that some of the encoding from external sources will cause display anomalies. In many cases, you are not seeing those due to additional display logic that has been added. However, it is not always feasible or possible to prevent the display issues.

Example:

This is an example of encoding causing a display issue using Safari to create content within OfficeEMR:

<p>Problem List</p> <p>1. Active - I873 - Chronic venous hypertension (idiopathic)</p> <p>vs. Enc. Prob. List w Comp Last Note</p> <p>Problem List</p> <p>1. I873 - Chronic venous hypertension (idiopathic) - 12/03/2024 - safari's browser patient's comma for apostrophe testing</p>	<p>Cardio HPI</p> <p>Reason For Visit: Maverick states that he is here for the following reason: symptoms. HPI - Visit Reason - Comments:Apostrophe testing in the patient's chart using Microsoft Word and the doing a copy and paste into the patient's chart for the HPI</p> <p>Cardio HPI</p> <p>Reason For Visit: Maverick states that he is here for the following reason: symptoms. HPI - Visit Reason - Comments:2-3/4:2@3; (me) \$7 @9</p> <p>Functional Class: NYHA functional class I. Canadian Cardiovascular Society Class IV. 5-6 and @ 2 (3-4) and \$4.</p> <p>Exam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observation: This commentary in the patient's chart entered through chrome's browser for apostrophe testing <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Safari's testing below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ellipsis ⋮ • dash - like 2-3 • question mark ? • and more; (th1\$) and/ ⋮th@t⋮ </div> <div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Additional text from Safari's browser for apostrophe testing in patient's notes.</p> </div> <p>Assessment and Plan</p>
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Solution

To help prevent these issues, we recommend the following best practices:

1. **Use Chrome Browser:** We support and encourage the use of Chrome as our system is coded and tested extensively for compatibility with it. Using Chrome not only ensures optimal performance within the EMR but also provides better interoperability when accessing external data sources.
2. **Strip Encoding:** When copy-pasting from sources known to cause issues, use a tool like Notepad to strip out any hidden formatting or encoding. To do this, paste the content into Notepad first, then copy it again from Notepad before pasting it into the EMR. This simple step cleans up the formatting of the copied data so that the pasted content is in a simpler style to reduce encoding discrepancies. Note that the source can be a previous completed template or note, but could also be found on the actual template being used.

Generally if you are seeing the issue for a single patient or only random patients then it is likely data copied into that patient's chart. If you fix it the next time you create update or create a new note then going forward you can use the cleaned up version as your base to prevent the display issue. However, if you see it for each patient using a particular template then the template is the likely source of the copy/paste of some encoded data issue. Fixing the data issue in the template will resolve the display issue going forward.

3. **Review Notes Before Signing:** If you've copy-pasted content—or are reusing notes that might include previously copied content—we strongly encourage reviewing your notes for any display anomalies before locking them permanently through signing. Cleaning up any

By following the practices outlined above, you can ensure both the stored text, and the displayed content remain clean and consistent. We are committed to providing a flexible and effective system while offering support for any specific difficulties you may encounter.

We appreciate your understanding and are here to help if you need further assistance. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Accessing Notepad

Accessing **Notepad** on a standard Microsoft PC or laptop is simple and can be done in several ways:

Option 1: Using the Search Bar

1. **Click on the Start Menu** (Windows icon in the bottom-left corner of your screen).
2. Type Notepad into the search bar.
3. **Select Notepad** from the search results to open it.

Option 2: From the Start Menu

1. **Click on the Start Menu.**
2. Scroll down the list of apps to find **Windows Accessories**.
3. Click **Notepad** to open it.

Option 3: Create a Shortcut

For frequent use, you can create a shortcut:

1. **Right-click** on the desktop or a folder where you want the shortcut.
2. Select **New > Shortcut**.
3. In the location field, type notepad and click **Next**.
4. Name the shortcut Notepad and click **Finish**.

Once opened, simply paste your content into Notepad, copy it again from there, and paste it into the EMR. This process removes hidden formatting or encoding that could cause issues.
