

AI-03983 Amazing Charts vs OpenEMR

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Is there a better way to transfer lab results from a fax or scan to Amazing Charts EMR without manually typing the info and goes directly to a patient's chart? Does OpenEMR has a feature to upload lab results effeciently.

Yes, there are significantly faster, more automated ways to handle incoming lab reports in both systems without relying on manual typing.

Manually keying in data from flat files (like PDFs or faxes) is incredibly inefficient. To bypass this, both platforms rely on **Electronic Lab Interfaces (HL7/API feeds)** or **integrated cloud-fax document workflows** that match reports to the patient chart with minimal clicks.

1. Automated Lab Results in Amazing Charts

To stop manual data entry in Amazing Charts, you have two primary paths depending on how the labs are originating:

Method A: Cloud-Fax Workspace Integration (via Updox)

If you are still receiving physical faxes or scanned documents, you can use **Updox**, which is the natively integrated cloud-fax and document management partner for Amazing Charts.

- **How it works:** Inbound faxes arrive digitally inside an Updox workspace directly on your computer.
- **The workflow:** Instead of typing the data, you view the document, select the matching patient from your Amazing Charts database, tag the document type (e.g., "Lab Report"), and hit "Send to Progress Note" or "Sign Off."

- **The result:** The actual scanned document/fax goes straight into the patient's chart and appears in the provider's inbox for review without manual data entry.

Method B: Direct Electronic Lab Interfaces (The Gold Standard)

If you are ordering from major national labs (Quest, Labcorp) or large regional hospital labs, you can bypass faxes entirely. Amazing Charts partners with **OpenText EMR-Link** to provide bi-directional or results-only interfaces.

- **How it works:** The lab transmits structured data directly using an HL7 data feed.
- **The result:** The results populate directly inside the patient's chart as discrete, structured data. This means values (like an A1C level) can be trended on a graph over time.

2. OpenEMR: Efficient Lab Uploads and Automation

OpenEMR has a highly robust, built-in **Procedures and Electronic Reports subsystem** specifically designed to handle lab files efficiently without manual entry.

Method A: Built-In Modules & APIs (e.g., Quest Quantum Hub)

OpenEMR features native and community-built API modules. For instance, the **Quest Quantum Hub** module connects directly to the lab's APIs.

- Once configured, OpenEMR polls the lab server automatically. When a result is ready, it pulls down the data and links it directly to the patient's record under **Procedures → Electronic Reports**.

Method B: Automated HL7 Imports via SFTP/Filesystem

If your local or regional lab can drop results onto a secure server or folder as standard **HL7 (ORU) text files**, OpenEMR can ingest them natively:

- You set up the lab as a Provider in the OpenEMR Address Book and point the filesystem or SFTP path to the folder where the lab files land.
- OpenEMR reads the incoming HL7 file, parses the patient's demographics/NPI, matches it to the correct record, and populates the chart.

Method C: Manual File Upload (Batch Processing)

If a lab emails you a discrete file or you download a batch of digital text/HL7 reports from a lab portal:

1. Navigate to **Procedures** → **Electronic Reports** in OpenEMR.
2. Use the built-in **Upload** field to select the file batch.
3. The system parses the data, matches the patient internal IDs, and queues them up for the provider to click "Sign Results," mapping them directly to the charts.

Summary Comparison

Strategy	Amazing Charts Solution	OpenEMR Solution
For Paper/Scans/Faxes	Updox Integration: Digital tagging, signing, and direct routing into the chart as a document.	Documents Module / Inbound Fax Link: Manually attach files directly to the patient record.
For Digital Lab Connections	OpenText EMR-Link: Connects to 600+ labs to deliver discrete structured data.	Procedures Subsystem: Direct HL7 parsing via SFTP or native API hubs (like Quest).
If you want to completely eliminate data entry and have values appear as chartable numbers, setting up a direct HL7/API lab interface is the ideal solution for either platform. Are you looking to connect with a specific major national lab, or are you primarily trying to optimize the workflow for local, unstructured faxed PDFs?		

Is the OpenEMR module mentioned is free? or I have to pay?

The **OpenEMR codebase and its built-in modules are 100% free and open-source**. There are no licensing fees, no per-user monthly costs, and no paywalls

to unlock features like the **Procedures Subsystem** or the **Quest Quantum Hub** module.

However, moving data from an external company (like Quest Diagnostics) into your private server introduces real-world variables. Depending on how you manage your OpenEMR instance, you may encounter third-party infrastructure or service fees.

Here is exactly where the money does and doesn't go:

1. What is Free (\$0)

- **The Software & Modules:** You can pull down the code for OpenEMR and its lab integration modules directly from GitHub or the official codebase without paying a dime.
- **The Ingestion Engine:** Setting up local folders to automatically read, parse, and map raw HL7 lab files using standard file-transfer scripts costs nothing in software licenses.

2. Where You Might Have to Pay

While the code is free, a live clinical lab connection usually incurs costs in three specific areas:

A. The Lab Vendor Connect Fee (The Variable Cost)

To get a secure, live feed from a lab company (like Quest or Labcorp), you have to register your practice with them (e.g., via portals like getmyinterface.com).

- **The Catch:** While some labs offer free results-only feeds to encourage you to order from them, many national or hospital labs charge a one-time connection/setup fee or a monthly maintenance fee to keep an active, secured API endpoint open for your practice. This fee goes directly to the lab company, not OpenEMR.

B. Third-Party Hosting or Managed Providers (If Applicable)

- If you host OpenEMR yourself on a local server or your own cloud account (like AWS), your only cost is your own hardware or baseline cloud bill.

- If you use a commercial, managed hosting provider for OpenEMR (like *OpenCoreEMR* or *CapMinds*), they usually charge a monthly add-on fee (typically \$25 to \$50/month) to configure, secure, and monitor your active electronic lab interfaces (E-Labs) for you.

C. Technical Expertise / IT Support

OpenEMR gives you the raw tools, but it is not "plug-and-play." Setting up background services to automatically poll an API, handling security keys (Client IDs, secrets), and mapping a lab's specific diagnostic catalog requires technical skill. If you don't have an internal IT resource or developer comfort, you may need to pay an OpenEMR consultant an hourly rate to do the initial setup and testing.

The Takeaway: If you have the technical capability to host and manage OpenEMR yourself, you can build a file-based automated lab import system for **\$0 in software fees**. If you want a direct API hook to a giant commercial lab, expect potential connectivity fees from the lab itself or your hosting vendor.