

Health Information Exchange (HIE)



What is HIE?

An HIE is the electronic movement of health-related information among organizations according to nationally recognized standards. HIE is also sometimes referred to as a health information network (HIN).

Can anyone see my personal health information on the Internet?

No, your medical information is kept private and secure and is viewable only by authorized healthcare providers.

How do I know my information is kept private and secure?

State-of-the-art systems are used to secure records to the greatest degree possible and prevent access by unauthorized persons. All systems must comply with the security rules of the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). HIPAA is the minimum requirement, though state laws and regulations are often more strict.

What types of information might be shared in an HIE?

An HIE may share clinical information such as test results, current medication, allergies, and other clinical information vital to your care. Certain demographic information used to identify the individual, such as name, birth date, and address, might also be shared.

What does this mean to me?

Participating in an HIE—that is, consenting to share your health information with your healthcare providers—offers major benefits to you and your family. Benefits include:

Emergency Treatment. Medical staff immediately know about your allergies, health problems, medications, and prior visits, helping them care for you without delay.

More complete and accurate information. HIE gives your care providers greater access to the information needed to diagnose your health problems earlier. They will know more about you and your health history before they recommend treatment.

Improved Care. Access to information about care you received elsewhere gives a better, more complete picture of your health and provides information needed to provide the best care possible. That means your care providers can make sure the treatment they give doesn't interact badly with other treatments you may be receiving. For example, when you can't remember what medications you are taking, HIE can make information about your conditions and medications available to your doctors, so they will know the right thing to do instead of doing something that might be harmful.

Patient empowerment. You can take a more active role in your health and in the health of your family. You can receive an electronic copy of your medical information and share it securely over the Internet with your providers.

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HIE and health information technology (HIT) provide the tools to improve care and reduce cost. Using technology will help you be more informed about your own health and take personal responsibility for your healthcare.

What does HIE mean to my provider?

- A complete record improves communication between you and your doctor. Your physician can send you reminders about scheduled appointments and tests, review your test results, and create a better profile of your health when he or she can share your information through an HIE.
- Through an HIE, your providers and their staff can securely review your key health data and eliminate the need to complete the same forms over and over again.
- Access to your complete clinical information will assist your care provider in giving you high quality care.
- Providers need access to as much useful information as possible while treating their patients. Viewing your complete medical history—including lab history, medication, and immunization histories—helps your provider make better decisions about your care.

What questions should I ask?

Ask your doctor or patient representative the following questions:

1. Is my health information automatically shared in the HIE?
2. Who controls my information? Me, the HIE, or my doctor?
 - What if I don't want my information shared?
 - Can I control the information my doctor sees?
 - Can I control which doctor sees what information?
3. Do I have to take action to not participate?
4. If your doctor uses terms like opt in/opt out, ask what they mean.
 - What happens when I opt in?
 - What happens when I opt out?
 - Can I opt out of sharing a visit or a lab test?
5. How secure is my personal information?
6. Do I have to share mental health, drug abuse, or other sensitive data?

If you have questions or concerns, contact your doctor or hospital's chief privacy officer.

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