

About Health Information Exchange

What is Health Information Exchange (HIE)?

Health Information Exchange (HIE) is the sharing of personal health information electronically between or among organizations within a region, community, or hospital system. The goal of HIE is to provide safer and more timely patient care.

What information is “exchanged”?

Information about your medical history is exchanged. This includes, but is not limited to, your ongoing health conditions, medications, allergies, immunizations, lab and procedure results, and doctor’s notes.

Is some of my most sensitive health information provided extra protection?

Certain kinds of health information, including records of substance use treatment, require your written authorization to be shared through health information exchange. You can also provide authorization on kp.org by clicking here:

<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health/mycare/consumer/my-health-manager/mymedical-record/authorize-sharing/>

Additionally, per Maryland law, Mifepristone data and other diagnoses and procedures related to abortion care are blocked from health information exchange. The following Maryland Department of Health websites define what specific data cannot be shared:

<https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/10.11.08.03.aspx>

<https://dsd.maryland.gov/regulations/Pages/10.11.08.04.aspx>

This information is blocked via HIE from all Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic facilities, even those outside the state of Maryland.

Why is Health Information Exchange important?

HIE helps improve the quality of patient care and reduces costs.

- HIE improves care: By getting information from outside sources, your health care providers can get a more complete picture of your medical history and have it all in one place, reducing the likelihood of conflicting diagnoses, prescriptions, and treatment plans.
- HIE saves time: Your health care providers can get your information quickly. This means less time searching, calling, and faxing your information. You may also avoid unnecessary return visits because your provider may have near-immediate access to medical information necessary for your care.
- HIE reduces cost: By having access to your outside records, your health care provider may not need to order tests or procedures that you have already had completed at another health care provider.

Who can request my personal health information from “outside” organizations, including other Kaiser Permanente regions?

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) prohibits health care providers from sharing your personal health information for most purposes other than treatment, payment, or health care operations without first obtaining special written authorization from you to do so. As a result, only participating HIE organizations that require your personal health information for purposes of treatment, or for verifying public or private insurance coverage, can request your information.

How does Kaiser Permanente ensure the security and privacy of my health information — especially when it is being transferred or exchanged?

Your health information is protected by state-of-the-art systems that use many security measures. All systems must comply with the security and privacy provisions of HIPAA and similar state laws that may apply.

Which organizations can Kaiser Permanente send my clinical information to through HIE?

Kaiser Permanente can send your clinical information to other Kaiser Permanente regions as well as many participating outside hospitals, doctor’s offices, other care settings, public health authorities and other HIE participants. The list of possible “partners” keeps growing, and it is built into the system that your Kaiser Permanente provider uses. If your non Kaiser Permanente provider has an electronic record, ask if exchange is possible. It’s important for you to tell your health care provider if you have medical records in another Kaiser Permanente region or outside facility. Once this is known, your record can be requested (dependent upon exchange capabilities with the outside facility).

Can I refuse to allow Kaiser Permanente to share my health information through HIE?

No, under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Kaiser Permanente can legally share your health information with your other care providers for the purposes of treatment and care coordination. It is important for your care providers to have timely access to this information so that they have a complete picture of your medical history, reducing the likelihood of conflicting diagnoses, prescriptions, and treatment plans as well as repeated tests or procedures.

However, if your medical record contains certain information (such as from a substance use disorder program) that requires your authorization under other state or federal law before it is shared, then Kaiser Permanente will not release that information to your other treating providers through HIE until you provide authorization. To check if your authorization is required before Kaiser Permanente can release your records through HIE and to provide authorization, click here:

<https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health/mycare/consumer/my-health-manager/mymedical-record/authorize-sharing/>