

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/my-medical-record/authorize-sharing/>

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 health plans and 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).

If I do not want to send my health information through HIE, how do I opt out?

You may refuse to allow your information from Kaiser Permanente to be sent through health information exchange (that is, “opt out”) at any time. You may do this by [downloading the “opt out” form](#) or by [contacting Member Services](#). If you opt out, your information will not be electronically sent to other participants through the HIE, but it may be sent to them by other means such as fax or mail if requested by your health care provider. Opting out could deprive emergency physicians and other providers who are unfamiliar with your medical history of vital, possibly life-saving information which they could otherwise obtain through HIE. A request to opt

out of an HIE will be effective approximately five (5) business days after receipt by a Kaiser Permanente region and will not apply to any information sent through the HIE or exchanged with other participants before that date. If you choose to opt out of HIE, this will not affect your access to care at Kaiser Permanente in any way.

Can I opt out of sending information to just certain healthcare providers or send one type of health information (lab results) but not another (ongoing conditions list)?

At this time, if you decide to opt out of sending your information through HIE because of concern about a particular type of information or provider, none of your information will be sent electronically by the Kaiser Permanente region from which you have requested to Opt Out. In other words, opting out is an "all or nothing" concept and you cannot choose particular providers or types of information to send through HIE and reject others. For example, if you opt out of HIE because you object to the sharing of your ongoing conditions list, neither your ongoing conditions list nor any other type of protected health information will be sent through electronic exchange with any other HIE participant.

If I opt out of sending information electronically from my home Kaiser Permanente region, does that mean my information from other Kaiser Permanente regions and/or other non-Kaiser Permanente organizations also will not be sent through HIE?

No. If you do not want your health information sent through HIE from other Kaiser Permanente regions and/or other non-Kaiser Permanente organizations, you must opt out individually with each organization and/or Kaiser Permanente region. Until you opt out from these organizations, they can continue to send your health information electronically through HIE, including to the Kaiser Permanente region you already Opted Out of sending your information from electronically.