

About Health Information Exchange

What is Health Information Exchange (HIE)?

Health Information Exchange (HIE) is the electronic sharing of patient information between healthcare organizations (hospitals, doctor's offices, etc.). Through HIE, your doctors and nurses can better understand your health history. This helps your doctors and nurses make safe decisions about your 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 provide authorization on kp.org by clicking [here](#).

Additionally, per Maryland law, Mifepristone data and other diagnoses, procedures, and medications 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.
- HIE saves lives: emergency physicians and other providers who are unfamiliar with your medical history may obtain vital, possibly life-saving information through HIE which they might not otherwise obtain.

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 the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and similar state laws that may apply.

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

Any outside healthcare organization that participates in the same HIE network as Kaiser Permanente, including other Kaiser Permanente markets, may request your records, but only when coordinating your care or treatment.

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).

Kaiser Permanente may also share your health information with public health agencies through HIE, when required to do so by law (for example, positive COVID lab results).

Why can my dentist’s office receive my Kaiser Permanente clinical information through HIE?

If your dentist participates in one of the same HIE networks as Kaiser Permanente, then they can receive your Kaiser Permanente clinical information through that network as well. Under HIPAA, healthcare providers can obtain your clinical records to assist in treatment. Healthcare providers include dental practices.

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

Participation in HIE is your choice. You can choose to not have your information shared electronically through HIE (“opt out”) at any time, by filling out the “Health Information Exchange Opt-Out” form available [here](#).

You can choose from the following options when opting out:

- (1) Kaiser Permanente must stop sending your Kaiser Permanente health information to other healthcare organizations through HIE; and/or
- (2) Kaiser Permanente must stop receiving your health information from other healthcare organizations through HIE.

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 sharing my health information with specific healthcare organizations? Can I block just some of my health information, but share the rest?

No. If you decide to opt out of sending your Kaiser Permanente health information through HIE, then none of your information will be sent through HIE to any outside healthcare organizations. You

cannot choose to block the exchange with just one healthcare organization or for just one type of information (for example, surgical history).

Similarly, if you decide to opt out of Kaiser Permanente receiving your outside health information through HIE, then Kaiser Permanente will not receive any of your health information from any outside healthcare organization through HIE.

If I opt out of Kaiser Permanente HIE, does that mean I have opted out of all outside HIE networks?

No. It will only opt you out of Kaiser Permanente sending and/or receiving your health information through HIE. If you wish for your information at another healthcare organization to not be shared with other non-Kaiser Permanente organizations through HIE, you must contact that organization to opt out.

Does opting out remove my records that were already shared through HIE?

No. Your health information sent through HIE before the opt out form is completed will not be unshared.

Does opting out of HIE prevent my health information from being shared through other methods?

No. If you opt out, your information will not be electronically shared with other participants through HIE, but it may be shared through other methods such as fax or mail if requested by your health care provider. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) permits health care providers to share your personal health information for treatment, payment, and health care operations without first obtaining special written authorization from you to do so.