

## **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 sharing organizations combine to form an HIE *network*. The goal of HIE is to provide safer and more timely patient care.

## **What information is “exchanged”?**

- At a minimum, lists of your ongoing health conditions (“problems”), medications and allergies are shared with other participating network providers. Your lab and procedures results and doctor’s notes can be exchanged with some HIE participants, but not with all.

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

- Certain kinds of health information, including psychotherapy notes, records of substance use treatment and genetic testing require your written authorization to be shared through health information exchange.

## **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 law (often referred to as “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 HIE networks is Kaiser Permanente connected with to share my clinical information?**

- KP can exchange your clinical information with other Kaiser regions as well as many participating outside hospitals, doctor's offices, other care settings as well as 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 my health information exchanged electronically, how do I Opt Out of the HIE networks Kaiser Permanente connects with for exchange?**

- You may refuse to allow your information to be exchanged in any of our HIE networks (that is, "opt out") at any time. You may do this by downloading the Opt Out form from [kp.org](http://kp.org) under Forms and Publications or by contacting Member Services. If you opt out, this will mean that your information will not be electronically exchanged with 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. 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 one exchange and still participate in another exchange or share one type of health information (lab results) and not another (problem list)?**

- At this time, if you decide to Opt Out of exchanging your information because of concern about a particular type of information or provider, none of your information will be shared through a Kaiser Permanente HIE network. In other words, opting out is an "all or nothing" concept and you cannot choose particular providers or types of information for electronic exchange and reject others. For example, if you opt out of HIE because you object to the sharing of your problem list, neither your problem list nor any other type of protected health information will be available for electronic exchange with any other HIE participant.

**If I Opt Out of Kaiser Permanente HIE networks, does that mean I have Opted out of all outside HIE networks?**

- No. Completion of Kaiser Permanente's Opt Out form does not opt you out of *other* health information exchanges in which Kaiser Permanente providers are not participants (non-KP electronic information sharing). If you wish to opt-out of another HIE network, you are responsible for arranging that according to the rules of that network. By Opting out of KP's HIE networks, your health information will not be electronically shared by Kaiser with outside organizations requesting this information.