

Notice to Patients Regarding the Illinois Health Information Exchange's EHR Connect

**This Notice describes how your health information may be shared electronically
and your choices about sharing this information**

What is the ILHIE?

Your providers share your health information with each other to assist in your care. The Illinois Health Information Exchange (“ILHIE”) is a statewide, secure network that uses modern technology so your providers can electronically share information about your health care. Federal and Illinois law protects your health information in electronic and paper files.

What are Electronic Health Records (“EHRs”)?

An EHR is an electronic version of your health record that is created using computers and that includes much of the same information also held in your doctor's paper file. Your health information is stored in your health care provider's office and can be accessed only by other authorized users.

What is ILHIE EHR Connect?

ILHIE's EHR Connect (“EHR Connect”) is a service of the ILHIE that allows your doctors, specialists, hospitals, clinics, laboratories, pharmacies and public and private health insurance plans, including Medicaid (“EHR Connect Users”) to share a summary of your electronic health information over a secure network.

Who Can Access my Health Information through EHR Connect? For What Purposes?

Only authorized EHR Connect Users who are involved in your health care can access your health information through EHR Connect for authorized purposes like assisting with treatment, payment and health care operations. Only EHR Connect Users with correct information and passwords can view, update, or exchange your health information. EHR Connect also tracks who views your health information and when.

What are the Benefits of EHR Connect? Why Should I allow my Providers to Share my Health Information through EHR Connect?

- EHR Connect allows your health care providers to access an updated summary of your health information, for a more complete picture of your health history to allow for better informed decisions about your care. This may improve your safety.
- When you need care, you might be unable to provide important health information. Allowing a health care provider to access your health information through EHR Connect can improve the quality of your care and could save your life.
- The ability to access your health information might result in not having to repeat the same test multiple times.

What are the Risks of EHR Connect?

EHR Connect is protected by safety and security measures to make sure your health information is private and only available to EHR Connect Users. But, like any electronic record, there could be a breach of security and someone who should not have your health information may get and use your information for identity theft or other illegal activities. While this could also happen with paper health records, a breach in your EHR, or an error in your EHR information, may affect more records or be shared with more EHR Connect Users than might happen with paper records.

Where Does the Health Information in EHR Connect Come From?

Your health information comes from EHR Connect Users with information about you, such as your doctors, pharmacies, clinics, laboratories, hospitals, therapists, or other health care providers.

What Health Information Will be Shared through EHR Connect by EHR Connect Users? What Will Not be Shared?

Your health information that may be shared through EHR Connect may include your diagnoses, test results, medications, allergies, laboratory test results, and other treatment information. Some specially protected health information will not be shared through EHR Connect unless you give permission.

Will Mental Health Treatment Records be Shared through EHR Connect by EHR Connect Users?

Yes. Recently, important changes were made in Illinois law to facilitate electronic sharing of health information through EHR Connect. This includes sharing of mental health information. Previously, you had to give consent to share your mental health information. While special consent is still needed for psychotherapy notes, if you do not wish to have your other mental health information shared through EHR Connect, you should complete the “ILHIE's EHR Connect Opt-Out Form” (see below).

Will AIDS Information, Genetic Testing Information, and Sexual Assault Health Records be Shared through ILHIE EHR Connect by EHR Connect Users?

No, not unless you consent. This information is considered specially protected health information and your EHR Connect Users cannot share this information through EHR Connect without your consent as required by law.

Will Alcohol or Drug Treatment Health Records Be Handled Differently?

It depends. Some alcohol and drug abuse health care providers have restrictions on sharing your drug and alcohol abuse health records under Federal and Illinois law, and these will not be shared through EHR Connect. Check with your provider or visit (HYPERLINK to website) for more information.

Can I Hold Back Some Health Information that I do Not Want to be Shared through EHR Connect?

No, at this time EHR Connect cannot exclude specific information in your record from being shared. You are either all in or all out.

What About Patients who are Under 12 Years Old?

Parents and legal guardians of patients ages 11 and under can make the decision about whether the minor's health information can be shared through EHR Connect. Patients aged 12 and older must make their own decision about ILHIE EHR Connect participation.

Do I have to Participate in ILHIE EHR Connect?

No. Participation is voluntary. If you do not want your health information to be shared, or if your circumstances change and you no longer want to share your health information, you can opt out. However, opting out of EHR Connect means that your health information will not be available through EHR Connect even in the case of a life-threatening medical emergency. If you opt out of sharing information through EHR Connect, information that is shared as permitted by law may still be shared through the ILHIE, such as public health data.

I Want to Participate. How Can I be Included in EHR Connect?

If you want your health information to be shared by EHR Connect Users, you do not need to do anything unless your health care provider has removed you from participation because of specially protected health information in your record. (See "I Previously Opted Out of EHR Connect, but I Changed My Mind. How do I Participate in EHR Connect?" below for more information.)

I do Not Want to Participate. How Do I Opt Out of EHR Connect?

There are two ways to opt out of EHR Connect. Ask your health care provider for an "ILHIE's EHR Connect Opt-Out Form" or visit (HYPERLINK to form), then do one of the following:

1. Complete the form and give it to your health care provider, **or**
2. Complete the form and have it signed by a notary public. Notarization protects you and assists the ILHIE Authority to verify your identity. Submit the notarized form by fax to XXX-XXX-XXXX, scan and email the form to XXX@XXX.gov, or mail to: ILHIE Authority, 100 West Randolph Street, Suite 4-550, Chicago, IL 60601. It may take up to 3 business days from receipt by the ILHIE Authority of your form for the restriction on the sharing of your health information to take effect.

Please Note: Opting out of EHR Connect does not mean that you have opted out from all other health information exchanges. Ask your health care provider if they participate in other health insurance exchanges and if you need to complete an additional opt-out form.

I Previously Opted Out of EHR Connect, but I Changed My Mind. How do I Participate in EHR Connect?

Even if you previously submitted an "ILHIE's EHR Connect Opt-Out Form," you can change your mind and decide to participate at any time. Ask your health care provider for an "ILHIE's EHR Connect Opt-In Form" or visit (HYPERLINK to form), then submit the completed form to your health care provider. Once your provider submits your completed form to the ILHIE Authority, it may take up to 3 business days from receipt for the restriction on the sharing your health information to be removed. Once you are participating, the information that your EHR Connect Users have will be available through EHR Connect, including information collected from the time before you decided to opt in to EHR Connect.

What if I Have More Questions?

For more information about EHR Connect or your privacy rights, please refer to your health care provider's HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices, or speak to the HIPAA Privacy Officer or your health care provider. Your health care provider wants you to have the information you need to make an educated choice about the way your health information is shared. You can also contact the ILHIE Authority at (HYPERLINK to website) or XXX for more information.