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FAQs

Transforming Information
into Better Health

Frequently Asked Questions About HealthShare Montana

Have a question but not seeing it here? Please [contact us](#) and we'll be happy to answer all your questions.

What is HealthShare Montana?

HealthShare Montana is a non-profit organization focused on the secure exchange of healthcare information to help improve healthcare quality and reduce costs. HealthShare Montana is Montana's state designated health information exchange organization.

What is a state designated health information exchange organization?

Every state had the opportunity to designate an organization to receive federal funding in order to develop a statewide health information exchange. HealthShare Montana was designated as such by Governor Brian Schweitzer in May of 2009.

What is the health information exchange (HIE)?

The health information exchange (HIE) is a secure electronic network that uses state-of-the-art technology to help ensure that medical professionals can access their patients' most up-to-date health information. Montana's state designated health information exchange is called HealthShare Montana.

Why is HealthShare Montana building the health information exchange?

To create a secure electronic location for important medical information so that it can be communicated in a confidential and

timely manner among medical providers.

How did this project get started?

U.S. Senator Max Baucus brought together a group of healthcare leaders from across the state in 2006 and began developing a health information exchange project to help improve the quality and efficiency of healthcare for the citizens of our state. In May 2009, Governor Brian Schweitzer named HealthShare Montana the “designated health information exchange organization” for Montana, making HealthShare Montana eligible to receive federal funding to begin building the exchange.

Who oversees the operations of HealthShare Montana?

HealthShare Montana is governed by a board of directors that includes representatives from state government, major payers, consumer groups, large and small healthcare facilities and individual physicians. Day-to-day operations are managed by a staff located in Billings, Montana. View the complete list of [staff](#) and [board members](#).

Is there a place where I can make general comments or suggestions?

Yes, we welcome your questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions. Please call us toll-free at (855) 655-4768 or locally at (406) 794-0170, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm. You may submit your comments from the [Contact](#) page, or e-mail us at info@healthsharemontana.org.

What happens if I am travelling outside of Montana when I seek treatment? Will my electronic healthcare information be available?

Yes, if you subscribe to the HealthShare Montana patient portal, you can safely and securely give online access to your personal health information to any provider involved in your care, anywhere.

Who will have access to my health information through HealthShare Montana?

In normal circumstances, only medical professionals that you have an established relationship with will have access to your health information through HealthShare Montana. In an emergency, any medical professional caring for you can access your health information if you are participating in HealthShare Montana.

Who can view my health care data?

- You or your legal representative – You can request a copy of your records from your provider.
- Providers – Your healthcare providers and staff.
- Insurers – Medical insurers have a legal right to access medical data related to an insurance claim.
- Public health officials – Immunization records and those conditions that are required by law to be reported are sent securely to public health officials.
- Researchers – To improve care across our state, de-

identified data (all information that could identify you is removed, and combined with de-identified data from others) is available for study only under very controlled conditions.

- HealthShare Montana's auditing staff – We allow access only for auditing and checking data accuracy. Auditors are held to the highest levels of accountability and confidentiality.
- Others allowed under the HIPAA rules and regulations.

Will insurers have access to my health information?

Medical insurers have a legal right to access medical data related to an insurance claim. The health information exchange will not change who may view your medical information, it is just changing how they view it. The same people who could view your paper records in the past will now be able to view the same information electronically.

What happens if there is an emergency, my doctor needs my information, and I am unable to speak for myself?

In an emergency, any participating medical professional caring for you can access your health information in HealthShare Montana. HealthShare Montana keeps a record of who views your information and performs audits to help ensure the confidentiality of your health information.

What if I don't want to participate?

Your health information, your choice – If you do not want your health information available on the HIE, please complete an [opt-out form](#) and submit electronically. You may also print the [Opt-Out form](#), and mail or fax it to us at:

Privacy Officer @ HealthShare Montana

2475 Village Lane, Suite 302
Billings, MT 59102
Fax: (406) 248-9373

To request a copy of the Opt-Out form, please call (406) 794-0170. If you opt out, providers may still send data to the HIE but your information will not be made available to any providers participating in the exchange.

The disadvantages: If you opt out, emergency medical providers and your regular healthcare providers may not have access to all of your health information. This could result in duplicate testing, incomplete medication lists, and missed provider alerts to potentially dangerous drug allergies or interactions.

Wouldn't it be safer if my health information stayed in paper charts?

Natural disasters have proven that paper records can be accidentally destroyed. In addition, while providers go to great lengths to protect your privacy, paper records are more likely to be misplaced, become illegible, changed, or viewed by unauthorized personnel. The HIE is an electronic system that is able to track each time your medical record is accessed, who accessed it, and what they did with your information.

Where can I get my questions answered about Montana's health information exchange?

We welcome your questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions. Please call us toll free at (855) 655-4768 or locally at (406) 794-0170, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm, or email us at info@healthsharemontana.org. Of course, any time you have questions regarding your healthcare, you may always discuss your concerns with your healthcare provider.

What information may be accessed through HealthShare Montana?

HealthShare Montana will contain such things as demographics, insurance information, advanced directives, and information related to your healthcare visits.

Why should I participate in Montana's health information exchange?

- Increased safety - If you're sick or badly injured, your healthcare provider needs access to all of your health information. The HIE can also help your provider avoid prescribing medications for you that may cause potentially dangerous drug allergies or interactions.
- Lower cost - Your healthcare providers can more easily exchange information, which can help reduce costly duplicate tests.
- Better care - The HIE involves all your providers in your care by letting them securely exchange important healthcare data.



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This project is funded in whole or in part under a contract with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. The statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department.