



Illinois Health Information Exchange

Frequently Asked Questions

For Illinois Patients and Consumers

What is Health Information Technology?

This sheet is designed to help residents of Illinois to better understand how new technology will begin to change the face of healthcare as we know it. Today, most health care providers write your medical information on paper charts which are not easily available and are hard to share with your other care providers.

Fortunately, health information technology, sometimes called e-Health or Health IT, will allow your providers to use electronic computer networks to store, manage or exchange your records.

Every state, including Illinois is moving forward with e-Health to benefit patient health and lower the cost of healthcare delivery. E-Health will allow you to use this technology to communicate better with your doctor and learn and share information about your health. Health IT is working to empower people to improve their own health through new technology.

What are the Overall Goals of E-Health?

- Improve the quality of healthcare in America
- Provide better treatment outcomes
- Increase patient safety
- Control the rising cost of healthcare
- Enhance public health and disease surveillance
- Increase access to quality health care in underserved communities

What are Electronic Health Records?

A secure electronic version of a patient's medical history including much of the same information currently in your doctor's paper files such as your medical history, medications, allergies, lab test results, age, weight, and billing information.

What are the Patient Benefits of E-Health?

E-Health makes you the most important member of your health care team. It creates information organized around you. It gives you control over your own health information and empowers you play a bigger role in your overall health, and/or in the health of your family.

- You get better quality and safer care when your care providers have a complete picture of your medical history.
- Health information that could save your life is quickly available in an emergency situation instead of paper records stored in multiple locations such as at your doctor's or specialist's offices.
- Reduces the need to fill out forms every time you visit a care provider such as a specialist, clinic or visit a hospital. (Insurance forms can also be filed automatically)
- Your personal information is stored in a safe and secure system and can only be accessed by your care providers, with your consent.
- You can skip unnecessary duplicate tests, which are wasteful and can be risky.
- Lowers the cost of healthcare delivery

What is Health Information Exchange?

When your doctor's office, specialists, hospitals, clinics and labs share your health records electronically through a secure network.

Are my E-Health Records Private and Secure?

Federal law protects your health information whether it is in a paper chart or in an electronic format. Only authorized healthcare providers such as your doctor can create, view, update or exchange your records. All electronic health records follow strict guidelines and are shared through a secure network between your providers such as doctor's offices, hospitals, emergency rooms or clinics.

What is Electronic Prescribing?

Electronic prescribing, or e-Prescribing, is when your doctor sends your prescription electronically through a secure network directly to your pharmacy. The pharmacy receives the prescription and can fill it right away.

What are the Patient Benefits of e-Prescribing?

- Keeps you safer. The program can immediately warn your doctor about possible allergies or drug interactions. Your doctor can also see a list of all your currently prescribed medications.
- Your medications might be cheaper. When your doctor e-Prescribes, the program may suggest other medications at a lower cost and screens for medications covered by your insurance.
- It's quick and convenient. You'll no longer need to drop prescriptions off at the pharmacy and wait while it is filled. An e-Prescription is sent electronically directly to the pharmacy.
- Reduces potential errors made with unreadable handwritten prescriptions. An e-prescription is more clearly read than a handwritten prescription.

- You control who has permission to access this secure information. E-Prescribing complies with laws about who can view your prescription information.

For more information about e-Health and the

Illinois Health Information Exchange

visit www.hie.illinois.gov/