

Keeping You at the Center of Your Health Care

Health Information Exchanges, Their Benefits, and Your Choice

Virtua Health understands that you may receive some of your health care from providers other than Virtua. We also know that it is important for those providers to have up-to-date information about the health care you received at Virtua so they can provide you with the best care possible. For that reason, and with your best interests in mind, Virtua participates in health information exchanges (HIEs) to facilitate the secure electronic sharing of your health information with other HIE participants involved in your health care.





Why HIEs are beneficial

HIEs put you, the patient, at the center of your health care. They enable your health information to be available to make your current or future treatments better. HIEs give your participating health care providers more complete and timely information about your health care history, which enables them to make better, more informed decisions about your health care. Sharing information through an HIE also:

- ▶ Improves health care coordination
- ▶ Improves the quality of care
- ▶ Prevents delays in care
- ▶ Eliminates redundant or unnecessary testing
- ▶ Reduces health care costs
- ▶ Makes the overall patient experience better

What types of information are accessible via an HIE?

HIE participants may access information in your electronic medical record for treatment, payment, health care operations, and other legally permitted purposes. For example, your non-Virtua primary care provider may access information about testing you received during a recent visit to a Virtua emergency room, if your primary care provider participates in the HIE – this would help avoid duplicative testing. The health information shared may include information of a more sensitive nature, including but not limited to: genetic diseases or tests, substance use disorder, mental health conditions, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and birth control and abortion (family planning).



You can choose to **not** participate in HIEs

Your medical information will be automatically made available by Virtua through these HIEs unless you choose to opt-out. If you choose to opt-out, Virtua will not share any of your health information through the HIEs and your non-Virtua health care providers will not be able to access your Virtua health care information through the HIEs.

You may opt-out at any time. To do so, please visit virtua.org/HIE to complete our HIE Opt-Out Form and submit it as indicated. You may opt back in at any time. To do so, please complete our Cancellation of HIE Opt-Out Form and submit it as indicated. Please understand that if you opt-out of the HIEs that Virtua participates in, Virtua will still be able to access your health information in the HIE that another participant has shared.

It is important to understand that choosing not to participate in these HIEs does not prohibit Virtua from sharing your information with others involved in your care, as permitted by law, via alternate methods, such as by phone, fax, mail, or other electronic communications. It is also important to understand that providers throughout Virtua use a common electronic medical record system. Opting out of the HIEs will not prohibit or prevent your health information from being accessed and shared by your various Virtua providers through our electronic medical record system.

What is a Health Information Exchange (HIE)?

An HIE is an electronic network that allows those involved in your health care, such as providers, medical practices, clinics, hospitals, surgery centers, and health insurance companies, to securely access and share your health information electronically. The goal of an HIE is to help its participants provide better, more efficient care by enabling the timely and secure electronic sharing of their patients' health information. For example, if you are hospitalized in a non-Virtua hospital, that hospital could quickly access your recent EKG results from your Virtua cardiologist without having to call the cardiologist's office and wait for the results to be faxed or mailed. Importantly, the only individuals and companies permitted to participate in HIEs are those involved with providing or paying for payment of health care. Additionally, HIEs may participate in other HIEs so your health care providers have the most comprehensive information about your care.

Virtua currently participates in the following HIEs:

- ▶ Camden Coalition Health Information Exchange, the HIE operated by the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers. Its participants include hospitals and provider offices in the South Jersey region.
- ▶ Epic Care Everywhere, the HIE operated by Virtua's electronic medical record system. Its participants include hospitals, physician practices, and other health care organizations across the country who use the same electronic medical record system.

HIEs are rapidly evolving. Virtua may participate in new HIEs or may stop participating in certain HIEs in the future. A current list of the HIEs that Virtua is participating in may be found at virtua.org/HIE.

Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact Virtua's Privacy Office at PrivacyOfficer@virtua.org.



Virtua Health

virtua.org/HIE