

Health Information Exchange (HIE) FAQ

What is Health Information Exchange (HIE)?

A Health Information Exchange, or HIE, is a way of sharing your health information among participating doctors' offices, hospitals, labs, radiology centers, and other health care providers through secure, electronic means. The purpose is so that each of your participating providers can have the benefit of the most recent information available from your other participating providers when taking care of you.

Which HIE networks is UCSF connected with to share my clinical information?

UCSF Health participates in several health information exchanges, including Epic's Care Everywhere, Epic's Qualified Health Information Network, Carequality and eHealth Exchange.

What is MD Link?

MD Link is a web-based tool that enables community practices, partners, research study monitors, and covered entities outside of UCSF Health to access shared patient information for better communication, care coordination, billing, and visibility to care transitions. Within MD Link, providers can make online referrals, send messages to UCSF clinical staff, and access secure, view-only versions of their patients' electronic medical records. MD Link helps providers stay connected to patients while they're in our care at UCSF.

What is in my UCSF HIE and MD Link patient record?

Your UCSF Health shared patient record will include your medications, allergies, current and past test results, notes, and summaries of your past and current health problems. Having timely access to a more complete and accurate health record will help your providers work together more easily, make better decisions about your care, eliminate redundant forms, and reduce mistakes, especially in an emergency.

Who can see my records?

Your UCSF Health Information may be made accessible for the purposes of treatment, research, payment, or health care operations to individuals who are specifically given rights to the HIE network or MD Link. For example, if one of your providers participates in UCSF HIE, they can access your health information maintained by your other providers in different health care systems that also participate in HIE.

How is my health information protected?

UCSF Health is committed to keeping your records private and secure. Federal and state guidelines govern how your health information can be exchanged, viewed, or used without your authorization. For example, we may use and share your information with other health care providers for your care, with health plans or other entities for payment for your care, among other purposes listed in our [UCSF Health Notice of Privacy Practices](#).

Who can request my personal health information from “outside” organizations?

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.

What can UCSF HIE do for me?

If you see multiple doctors who participate in UCSF HIE, they may see a more complete picture of your health and make more informed treatment decisions. The goal is for you to receive coordinated care more efficiently. Your health care information is available to participating health care providers where and when they need it without delay.

Having timely access to a more complete and accurate health record will help your providers work together more easily, make better decisions about your care, eliminate redundant forms, and reduce mistakes, especially in an emergency.

What can MD Link do for me?

MD Link improves care transitions, streamlining referral, lab, and imaging processes between UCSF Health and your PCP or specialist. MD Link provides a secure communication channel between UCSF and your external provider, keeping your health information safe.

Are there risks to opting out?

Yes. The goal of UCSF HIE and MD Link is to provide your providers outside UCSF Health secure access to the best available information about your health. By opting out, your providers outside of UCSF may have less information about you when making a diagnosis for you, or when making decisions with you about your care.

I don’t want to participate. How can I opt out?

Your choice to opt out of UCSF HIE or MD Link will not affect your ability to access medical care. Your UCSF health information will be visible to your outside providers through UCSF HIE and MD Link unless you Opt out by completing the [UCSF Electronic Opt out form](#) or by contacting UCSF at (415) 353-1936. Please allow up to two business days for processing your Opt out request.

If you want to stop your outside providers from sharing your information with UCSF, please contact them directly.

Is the Opt out form available in other languages?

Yes, the UCSF HIE Opt out form is available in English, Spanish, Russian and Traditional Chinese. Visit the [UCSF Medical Records Website](#), Health Information Exchange section for those options.

What are the limits of my Opt out?

While opting out will prevent UCSF Health from sharing your information through HIE and/or MD Link, we may still share it by other methods for reasons listed in our [UCSF Health Notice of Privacy Practices](#). For example, rather than using HIE or MD Link, we may fax or securely email your referral documents to your outside providers. UCSF health care affiliates that we host on our medical record system will still be able to access your record for your care, apart from HIE.

The HIE opt-out applies to future sharing by UCSF through these HIE networks. It does not retract or remove information that may have already been shared before the opt-out became effective.

Opting out of UCSF HIE may not prevent UCSF from receiving your information from your outside providers.

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

No. Completion of UCSF's Opt out form does not Opt you out of other health information. 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 UCSF's HIE networks, your health information will not be electronically shared by UCSF with outside organizations requesting this information.

What HIE exchange networks does UCSF participate in?

UCSF Health participates in several health information exchange networks, including:

- Epic Care Everywhere
- Epic Qualified Health Information Network (QHIN)
- Carequality
- eHealth Exchange

These networks allow UCSF to securely share health information with other participating health systems.