Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Veterans

How does the VA Mission Act change my health information sharing in VA? Section 132, MISSION Act removes restrictions on health information sharing and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans. It brings VA in line with other health-care providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information.

What does the VA Mission Act do with my VA health information? Veterans will experience improved continuity and quality of care because community providers will have access to necessary medical records. Community providers will now have access to all health information for Veterans for treatment purposes.

What is Section 132 and how does it affect me as a Veteran? Previously, VA had restrictions different from other health-care providers regarding the exchange of Veterans’ health information. This law removes those restrictions and ensures that community providers have access to appropriate health information for Veterans and brings VA in line with other health providers and federal standards related to the exchange of health information.

What are the benefits of sharing my health care information? VHIE shares the right information at the right time with your providers in order to help Veterans and their health care team make the best decisions about your health. This instant exchange of information can dramatically improve patient safety, especially during emergency situations, and improve overall coordination and continuity of care for Veterans who seek care in the community.

How can I participate in VHIE? All Veterans who have not previously signed form 10-0484 as of September 30, 2019 will be automatically enrolled but have the option to opt out. Beginning January 2020, a VA patient’s information will be shared with participating community providers that also provide health care services for the shared patient.

How do I choose not to share my health information? If you decide not to share your health information with community providers you should download, sign, and submit VA Form 10-10164 Opt-Out of Sharing Form to your local Release of Information (ROI) Office in person or by mail. This request stops sharing with all Health Information Exchanges and will remain in effect until revoked or replaced.
This process prevents VA from sharing your VA medical information. It does not opt you out of any community Health care programs. State law helps guide community care providers regarding HIE program participation. Please contact participating community care providers to learn how to opt in or out of their HIE process.

What if I change my mind about sharing my information?
If you decided not to share your health information but then change your mind, you can authorize VA to share your medical record with community providers by downloading, completing, and submitting VA Form 10-10163 to your local Release of Information (ROI) Office in person or by mail.

What is the Veterans Health Information Exchange (VHIE) Program?
VHIE is a secure network that connects medical records from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) with other federal, and community care partners. VHIE provides VA and community care providers secure access to certain parts of the electronic health record, which eliminates the need for Veterans and their families to carry paper medical records from one health care provider to another.

With VHIE, all your participating providers can access your records and health information electronically. To participate, all providers must meet stringent security requirements and join the eHealth Exchange, a network of doctors who securely share clinical information across the United States.

Can I submit my sharing option electronically?
Unfortunately, at this time, there is no mechanism for signing the form electronically. Veterans can print and sign the form, scan it, and send it via Secure Messaging in My HealtheVet. The form is being added to iMedConsent to allow electronic signature and submission at the Release of Information Office (ROI) at a local VA medical center.

VA Providers and Staff

VA and participating VHIE community care providers have access to complete and accurate information about their shared Veteran patients. VHIE shares the right information at the right time with providers to improve patient safety, coordination of care, and continuity of care for our Veterans.

What is the Electronic Health Information Exchange (HIE)?
The Electronic Health Information Exchange (HIE) allows participating health care providers from different health care delivery organizations to appropriately access and securely share patient health care information. This exchange is guided by Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations. Using HIE, health care information, which is digital in nature, can follow patients whenever and wherever it is needed. HIE makes it possible for the various and disparate providers involved in patient care to access the same information.
How is the information from community care providers made available?
VHIE uses the eHealth Exchange, a public-private partnership administered by the eHealth Exchange, to securely receive health information from and share health information with participating community care provider.

Is this exchange of health information safe and secure?
Rest assured. This health information is safe and secure as it moves from VA to participating community care providers.

What about Veteran privacy rights?
VA is committed to protecting Veteran privacy. VHIE uses secure technologies for information sharing between VA and participating community health providers. Only community health care providers and organizations that have partnership agreements with VA and are part of VA’s approved, trusted network may receive VA health information.

What hospitals or systems are participating in this program?
A listing of participating community care providers is located at https://www.va.gov/VLER/vler-health-your-area.asp. VA continues to add other providers as the program expands in pursuit of nationwide interoperability to enable the best care for our Veterans.

Will all VA medical facilities use electronic health information sharing?
Yes, VHA Directive 6371 mandates that all VA medical facilities use electronic health information sharing.

Who can see Veterans’ information?
VA providers and VHIE’s participating community care providers can see a shared Veteran’s health information. The list of participating community care partners is growing each month.