Notice of Data Practices

The Hawai'i Health Information Exchange (Hawai'i HIE) is a non-profit organization that provides a secure electronic system used by Hawai'i's hospitals, physicians, pharmacies, labs, and other medical facilities and professionals to exchange information about patients. The Hawai'i HIE is governed by a multi-stakeholder board of healthcare organizations, consumers, educators, and others.

We want people in the communities we serve to understand how their individually identifiable protected health information (PHI) is shared and protected in our system, **the Health eNet**.

Overview

Health information exchange (HIE) is the electronic transfer of PHI among different providers and organizations involved in the care of patients and in the interests of public health. HIE may improve the efficiency and reliability of communication among healthcare providers. For example, a secure electronic system for exchanging PHI can be used to replace phone, paper, and fax transactions – as well as incorporate medical information into providers' electronic health records in a meaningful way. This can potentially improve the accuracy of medical records, reduce time and costs involved in exchanging information needed for diagnoses and treatment procedures, and offer other improvements to the delivery of patient care.

What is the Health eNet? The Health eNet is a secure, encrypted electronic system used to exchange and access PHI, such as a patient's medical history, laboratory results, medications, diagnoses, procedures and demographic information.

The Health eNet allows healthcare providers to exchange information in three ways:

1. A provider can send a secure message or a patient referral to another provider. For example: a primary care physician can electronically refer a patient and transmit encrypted information about the patient to a specialist.
2. A provider can access necessary health information about a patient contributed by multiple providers using a single search (i.e. "query") of the Health eNet. For example: an emergency room physician can query the Health eNet to quickly obtain the information needed to administer appropriate life-saving procedures and medications.
3. A provider can use the Health eNet to exchange information about multiple patients for healthcare and public health related purposes. For example, the Hawai'i Department of Health collects information about communicable diseases that may adversely impact a community as a whole.

Why is health information collected by the Hawai'i HIE? Providers across Hawai'i add to the value and effectiveness of the Health eNet query service by contributing their patients' PHI to the system. A provider can use the Health eNet to query the broad medical history of a patient, and reduce or eliminate the time spent making phone calls and waiting for faxes or delivery of information needed to treat the patient.

Access and Security of the Health eNet

Who has access to health information through the Health eNet? Only providers and organizations with valid, lawful needs to access PHI for healthcare and public health related purposes may apply to

use the Health eNet. When the Hawaiʻi HIE accepts a provider practice or organization as a Health eNet participant, only certain individuals identified by the participant are granted authorized access to the system.

How does the Hawaiʻi HIE keep records private and secure? The Hawaiʻi HIE uses a combination of technology, documented procedures and sound business practices to safeguard PHI stored in and exchanged via the Health eNet. For example, we employ:

- Encryption, firewalls and redundant data storage (i.e. data available via a secondary secure location in the event the primary data source fails) to protect data; and
- Electronic audit trails and review procedures in cooperation with our participants to track user activity within the system and ensure the system is only used for authorized purposes.

The Hawaiʻi HIE discloses PHI as directed by our participants and in accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA, which includes the federal regulations regarding the privacy and security of PHI) and other applicable laws. However, we never release PHI to third-parties for marketing purposes.

Patient Choice: Opt-Out Request Provision

We understand that individuals may have concerns about the privacy and security of their electronic PHI. Under HIPAA, an individual has the right, in most cases, to request restricted access, use or disclosure of his/her PHI. (Some disclosures, such as communicable disease reporting to government health agencies, are mandatory in the interests of monitoring and addressing public health concerns that may impact a community as a whole.) Also, the Hawaiʻi HIE provides an "Opt-Out" process so an individual can choose to block the ability to query his/her PHI in the Health eNet.

What happens if I choose to Opt-Out? After consulting with your provider, if you choose to "Opt-Out," the Hawaiʻi HIE will make changes in the system that block the ability of participating providers to query your PHI in the Health eNet. The information will still be stored in our system, but will remain unavailable to participants unless you later choose to "Opt-Back-In." Please also keep in mind that any PHI queried prior to processing an Opt-Out request may still be used by participating providers and other healthcare professionals involved in your care.

Before you make a decision, please consider the following:

- The services provided by the Hawaiʻi HIE are designed to be used in place of traditional methods of exchanging health information that may be less secure and less timely. For example: information that is faxed, mailed or delivered from one provider to another may physically change hands one or more times, and can be lost, misplaced or delivered to the wrong destination; and phone calls may not be immediately answered.
- Ask your provider to explain the specific role that participation in the Health eNet plays in your healthcare, and any risks or other consequences that may result from Opting-Out.

Where Can I Obtain Additional Information About the Hawaiʻi HIE and the Health eNet?

Additional information about the Hawaiʻi HIE, our services and other resources we provide can be obtained via our website, http://www.hawaiihie.org.