

Using Health Information Exchanges

How they can help patient care and your practice

Health information exchanges are local standardized data repositories through which hospitals, health care providers and pharmacists electronically document, track and share patient health data. Following is information on their benefits and how to access your local HIE.

Why use HIEs?

HIEs ensure key medical data – such as admissions, discharges and information associated with a visit – is complete, current and easily accessible. HIEs also improve the speed, quality, safety and cost of patient care, according to [HealthIT.gov](https://www.healthit.gov).

Participating in a local HIE can help you:

- Ensure patient records are complete and their medical history can be shared securely
- Standardize data so that it can be easily integrated into a patient's electronic health record
- Prevent errors and readmissions by ensuring that everyone involved in a patient's care has access to the same information

Closing care gaps

In addition to supporting patient care, HIEs may help improve performance in three Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Five-Star Quality Rating System measures. These measures require timely communication about patient admission and discharge to ensure documentation and outreach occur within the designated time frame. These measures are:

- **Transitions of Care**, which requires documentation of inpatient admission to the hospital, discharge from the hospital, patient engagement post-discharge and medication reconciliation
- **Follow-Up After Emergency Department Visit for People With Multiple High-Risk Chronic Conditions**, which requires follow-up services within seven days of discharge
- **Plan All-Cause Readmission**, which encourages follow-up services to prevent readmission within 30 days of discharge

How to access your local HIE

Contact your state's HIE representative. A list of state contacts and exchange service providers is available at HealthIT.gov. The website also includes news and updates on state HIE programs.

Speak with exchange service providers in your state or region. Keep in mind that they may differ in a variety of areas, including:

- Economics and sustainability
- Internal requirements
- Technology
- Risks and liabilities

Speak with your EHR vendor. Some vendors have incorporated HIE functionality into their EHRs. Things to consider:

- HIE capabilities within the EHR
- Privacy and security features
- Forms of exchange that are supported
- Costs of upgrading, maintenance and monthly charges

More resources



Regional and national admission, discharge and emergency department visit information is updated in the CareAllies-enabled population health tool, Arcadia, in real time. You can access the admissions and discharges report from the home page daily to conduct appropriate and timely follow up with patients who have had an event. If you are interested in gaining access to Arcadia or this report, please contact your HealthSpring representative.



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