

Question 1: What is electronic Health Information Exchange (HIE)?

Answer 1: Electronic Health Information Exchange (HIE) allows your participating health care providers from different health care delivery organizations to appropriately access and securely share your health care information. Using HIE, health care information can follow you whenever and wherever it is needed. HIE makes it possible for the various providers involved in your care to gain access to the same information.

Question 2: What is VLER HIE?

Answer 2: Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Health Information Exchange (HIE) is an initiative to share parts of the Department of Defense (DoD) medical record electronically, safely, and securely.

Question 3: What is the eHealth Exchange?

Answer 3: The eHealth Exchange is a rapidly growing health information exchange network for securely sharing clinical information over the Internet nationwide. It is the largest health information exchange infrastructure in the United States (U.S.). Current eHealth Exchange participants include large provider networks, hospitals, pharmacies, regional health information exchanges and many federal agencies, representing 40% of all U.S. hospitals, tens of thousands of medical groups, more than 8,000 pharmacies and 100 million patients.

Question 4: How secure is HIE?

Answer 4: HIE protects the privacy and security of your health care information by following the rules set in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996. The HIPAA Privacy Rule provides federal protections for individually identifiable health information and gives patients' rights about that information. The Privacy Rule permits the sharing of health information for patient care and other important purposes. The Security Rule lists administrative, physical, and technical safeguards that must be used to protect the privacy and security of your health care information.

Question 5: What are the benefits of VLER HIE and the eHealth Exchange?

Answer 5: Access to your medical history is very important to the health care providers caring for you. Using eHealth Exchange, your health care providers have a more complete view of your health record. This allows you and your health care team to make informed decisions about your health. Through the eHealth Exchange, your health care providers can share information on your prescriptions and medications, allergies, illnesses, laboratory and radiology results, immunizations, procedures, and clinical notes*. **To improve your care experience, health information may be shared as permitted by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) with other authorized organizations who partner with the MHS. To enhance coordination among care teams, this includes notes written by your clinicians, which could contain information about sexual assault, domestic violence, child/elder abuse, substance abuse, mental health, and sexually transmitted diseases.*

Question 6: What does it mean to Opt Out?

Answer 6: If you choose to opt out, the Military Health System (MHS) will not be allowed to electronically share your health care information through the eHealth Exchange for any reason, even in case of emergency where you may be unconscious. Your provider may not have the necessary information to save your life.

Question 7: What does it mean to Opt Back In?

Answer 7: A patient can request to opt back in at any time by going to www.TRICARE.mil/vler and following instructions for the *VLER HIE Opt Back In Letter*. When you opt back in, you allow your health care providers access to important health care information about you when you visit a medical facility connected with the eHealth Exchange and participating with the MHS.

Question 8: What is the downside of choosing not to participate (Opting Out) of VLER HIE and eHealth Exchange?

Answer 8: If you have opted out, in the case of an emergency where you may be unconscious, your health care providers may not have immediate and complete access to important health care information necessary to save your life.

Question 9: Are Active Duty able to opt out?

Answer 9: No, due to medical readiness and DoDI 6040.45 Active Duty are not able to opt out of VLER HIE.