

Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record Health Information Exchange Information Paper

SUBJECT: Military Health System Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record Health Information Exchange

KEY MESSAGES:

- Through partnership with the eHealth Exchange, the Military Health System (MHS) Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record (VLER) Health Information Exchange (HIE) joined national efforts to securely share MHS beneficiary health care information electronically with other federal and private sector partners from which MHS patients may receive health care
- This service is already part of TRICARE beneficiaries' health care benefit. While active duty members cannot opt out, if a non-active duty beneficiary does not wish to participate in VLER HIE Initiative, they should go to www.TRICARE.mil/vler to complete the *VLER HIE Opt Out Letter*
- Secure sharing of MHS patients' medical information is very important to make informed medical decisions, reduce unnecessary repeat tests, and to have instant access to medical history allowing the most informed decisions for MHS patient's health
- Through the eHealth Exchange, health care providers can immediately access and share your medical history, including:
 - Prescriptions and medications
 - Allergies
 - Illnesses
 - Laboratory and radiology results
 - Immunizations
 - Procedures
 - 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.

BACKGROUND: As part of the VLER HIE, the MHS joined national efforts to safely and securely share TRICARE beneficiary health care information electronically with other federal and civilian partners from which MHS patients may receive health care. VLER HIE enables MHS health care providers to share medical information with authorized federal and civilian network providers over a secure network known as the eHealth Exchange. By sharing through the eHealth Exchange, health care providers have a more complete view of patients' medical history which can assist them in making the best medical decisions. The value of electronically exchanging

health information is the ability to compile and build a more complete medical profile. Approximately 70% of the Department of Defense (DoD) beneficiary health care is delivered by private sector health care providers.

DISCUSSION: Timely sharing of vital patient information can better inform decision making at the point of care and allow providers to share and view information such as prescriptions, allergies, illnesses, lab and radiology results, immunizations and past medical procedures. The MHS currently shares active duty beneficiary data with HIE health care providers. Starting June 2016, the MHS began sharing non-active duty TRICARE beneficiary data. This benefit is part of each TRICARE beneficiary's existing entitlement and no other action by the beneficiary is required. Anyone who has a record in the DoD Clinical Data Repository (CDR), meaning anyone treated in a military hospital or clinic within the past 20 years, may have records that will be shared.

Active duty members will not be permitted to opt out of sharing their health care information through the VLER HIE Initiative due to medical readiness. Non-active duty beneficiaries may choose to opt out of this benefit. If a non-active duty beneficiary chooses to opt out and then changes his/her mind, that beneficiary can request to opt back in at any time.

If a non-active duty beneficiary chooses to opt out, the MHS will not be allowed to share that beneficiary's health care information through the eHealth Exchange, even in the case of an emergency. If a non-active duty beneficiary decides to opt out, other health care providers may not have complete access to important health information, even in the event of an emergency.

The process to opt out is easy. The beneficiary selects the *VLER HIE Opt-Out Letter* at www.TRICARE.mil/vler. Then the beneficiary completes, prints, signs, and mails it via the United States Postal Service to the address provided on the form.

SUMMARY: As more providers utilize HIE, beneficiaries and providers will benefit from quick and secure access to patient medical information. The VLER HIE Initiative is a critical component of a fully connected health care delivery system.