Behavioral Health Fact Sheet
The NC Health Information Exchange Authority

NC HealthConnex
Powering Health Care Outcomes
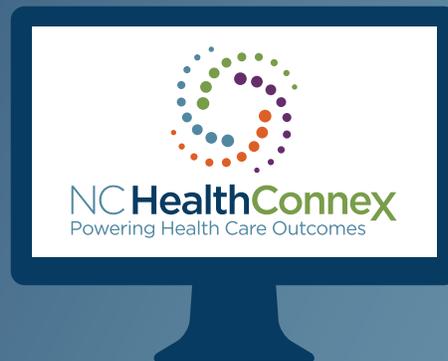
The NC Health Information Exchange Authority (NC HIEA) recognizes the importance of health care providers having access to behavioral health and treatment records in their daily health care practice. We also recognize the importance of behavioral health providers having access to their patients' physical health records to enable whole person care.
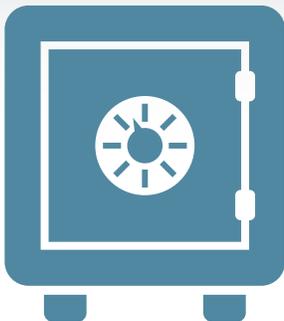
IT'S SAFE AND IT'S SECURE. IT HAS TO BE.

Only participating health care providers and other HIPAA covered entities that have signed contracts with the NC HIEA will be able to access a patient's medical information through NC HealthConnex. Patient data may be provided to third parties who have entered into contracts with the NC HIEA for limited purposes (e.g. the NC Department of Public Health for Immunizations). These contracts ensure that all relevant privacy statutes and regulations are followed in how health information is viewed, used and shared. The NC HIEA has the power to audit the use of patient information by each participating practice and each third party to ensure the law is being followed.

SENSITIVE DATA POLICY

Federal laws and regulations prevent the NC HIEA from receiving and/or managing certain types of mental health or substance use treatment data without patient consent.

Federal regulation 42 C.F.R. Part 2 prohibits certain health care providers from disclosing data that would identify a patient as having a substance use disorder unless the patient consents to the disclosure or the disclosure is permitted under Part 2. See C.F.R. 2.12(b). Consult with your legal counsel to determine if your services should be considered as a federally-assisted substance use disorder treatment program. Mental health providers should not send psychotherapy notes (as defined in HIPAA and below) to NC HealthConnex without patient consent.

BENEFITS OF HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGE

MY HEALTH RECORD

- A full "picture" of a person's health, including ambulatory visits, hospitalizations and medications
- Improved, more accurate and timely medication reconciliation that reduces errors and avoids unnecessary tests
- Access to test results, reducing costly duplicative tests and gaps in treatment
- Direct Secure Messaging, an encrypted email tool that allows you as a clinician to send Protected Health Information about your patients through a secure encrypted network

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DOCTOR ABLE TO IMPROVE DIAGNOSES

ER DOCTOR AND CARE TEAM ABLE TO QUICKLY ACCESS YOUR HEALTH HISTORY

LESS CHANCE OF HARMFUL DRUG INTERACTIONS

AVOIDANCE OR REDUCTION OF DUPLICATE MEDICAL TESTS

A NEW DOCTOR ABLE TO REVIEW YOUR HEALTH HISTORY PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT

DOCTOR WARNED OF POTENTIAL ALLERGIC REACTIONS

WHAT CAN BE SHARED?

Most behavioral health information is permitted to be shared through NC HealthConnex. Although participants cannot submit Part 2 data or psychotherapy notes to the NC HealthConnex data repository, participants are permitted to share these types of information via direct secure messaging with other participants through NC HealthConnex. The provider sending the message must comply with applicable law and obtain the required consent or authorization from the patient before disclosing the data.

The HIPAA Privacy Rule defines "psychotherapy notes" as follows: *Psychotherapy notes means notes recorded (in any medium) by a health care provider who is a mental health professional documenting or analyzing the contents of conversation during a private counseling session or a group, joint or family counseling session and that are separated from the rest of the individual's medical record. Psychotherapy notes exclude medication prescription and monitoring, counseling session start and stop times, the modalities and frequencies of treatment furnished, results of clinical tests and any summary of the following items: diagnosis, functional status, the treatment plan, symptoms, prognosis and progress to date.*

TYPES OF DATA SHARED

- Inpatient Admissions
- Discharge Information
- Diagnoses
- ER Reports
- Laboratory Results
- Allergies
- Prescribed Medications
- Procedures
- Problems
- Vital Signs
- Immunizations
- Smoking status
- Referrals
- Encounters

NC HEALTHCONNEX CONNECTION DEADLINE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the COVID-19 Recovery Act was signed into law by Governor Roy Cooper. This addresses the connection requirement to the state-designated HIE Network - NC HealthConnex, extending the June 1, 2020, connection deadline to October 1, 2021. In addition, all providers who have shown a good faith effort to connect to NC HealthConnex and have a valid Participation Agreement on file will also have the extended deadline of October 1, 2021.

Please note: If you were mandated to connect by June 1, 2020, your new deadline is October 1, 2021. Providers who have signed a Participation Agreement do not need to take further action. The NC HealthConnex technical team will reach out when technical discussions are to begin with your practice.
October 21, 2021

2019   2021
2018   2020   2022
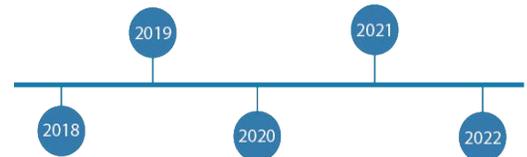
* Prepaid Health Plans
must connect at the start of capitated contract with DHB

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For health care providers who will be submitting patient health care data to NC HealthConnex, the NC HIEA Participation Agreement requests EHRs that are minimally capable of sending HL7 messages, version 2 and higher. EHR products that are ONC certified for Meaningful Use for the for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Incentive Programs are preferred. We are continuously connecting to additional vendors who are capable of meeting the connection requirements, and they will be added to the website as they go live.

While there are currently no fees charged by the State for the connection to or use of NC HealthConnex, some EHR vendors may charge fees (technical build, maintenance, etc.) to their customers for this connection.

NC DIT
Health Information Exchange
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

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