

Behavioral Health Information Sharing

Behavioral Health Information Sharing Advisory Group

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is focused on developing a strategy to support integrated care and services by enabling the electronic sharing of behavioral health information between providers. This is a critical step in supporting the coordinated care model, and realizing the goal of better health, better care and lower costs for everyone. The Behavioral Health Information Sharing Advisory Group was created to spearhead this work.

People served

The advisory group will develop products to assist providers in determining when behavioral health information can be shared without consent, and work to clarify misconceptions and confusion about applicable state and federal privacy laws that may currently limit information sharing.

Working with state stakeholders and federal partners, the group will seek to understand how widespread the use of information sharing is among providers and attempt to minimize the barriers providers face when sharing information. The advisory group will use existing solutions, or develop new solutions, to encourage the electronic sharing of behavioral health information.

Protecting a patient's personal health information is the most important goal. OHA is committed to making sure that the right systems are in place to protect personal health information. Though electronic information sharing is important to improve care coordination across providers, the advisory group's solutions will ensure that there are safeguards in place to protect patients/consumers.

What's changing?

As the state and providers begin to integrate the delivery of behavioral and physical health, it will be important to be able to share health information between providers to make sure that care is coordinated well for patients.

Many providers are exchanging behavioral health information through non-electronic means but fewer providers share behavioral health information electronically because of misconceptions about the restrictions imposed under state and federal laws, Electronic Health Record incompatibility, and limited knowledge about existing technological solutions. Because providers do not fully understand the laws about information sharing, there is a missed opportunity to provide the highest level of coordinated care.

Many providers in the state would like guidance about behavioral health information sharing and the intersection of state and federal law, especially around information sharing of substance use diagnoses and treatment.

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Benefit to clients and community

- Electronic information sharing between providers supports better overall care for patients and eases transitions between health care settings.
- Information sharing ensures that providers are able to make informed decisions/assessments about a patient's care given their medical history. Because of information sharing the quality of care, safety and effectiveness of provider recommendations improve.
- Improved information sharing through the use of existing technology solutions developed by the Oregon Health Authority.
- The Oregon Health Authority will better understand providers' needs and collaborate with them to develop long-term solutions that improve behavioral health information sharing.
- Providers will better understand federal and state law, including that state law supports information sharing for purposes of treatment, operations, payment and health oversight purposes.

System Impact

There are obstacles that limit information sharing between physical and behavioral health providers. If we want to improve health outcomes for all Oregonians, we need to create solutions that allow providers who are delivering care to share information while still protecting the patient's privacy. Developing a common strategy and approach to information sharing will allow CCOs and other providers to provide whole-person care to their patients.

For Information regarding the Behavioral Health Information Sharing Advisory Group or its efforts:

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Visit the advisory group website – <http://www.oregon.gov/oha/amh/Pages/bh-information.aspx>