

## Can I choose not to participate in NeHII?

**Yes.** We call this a decision to “opt out.” If you opt out, your health information will not be available for sharing through NeHII, with these exceptions: First, your name, address, and date of birth will appear in NeHII; Second, your opt-out status will also be available; Third, your doctors may be able to see your health information in their own electronic medical records. Your decision to opt out of NeHII will not affect your ability to receive health care. Participating in NeHII is not a condition to receiving care. However, if you opt out, it may affect what information your provider has available when providing your care. Your decision to opt out of NeHII applies only to sharing your information through NeHII. It does not affect other sharing of health information between your providers, health insurers or public health agencies.

## How can I opt out?

You may opt out and not participate in NeHII in two ways:

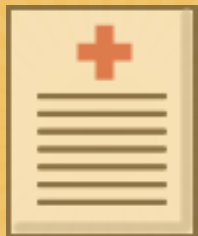
- 1) You can call the NeHII Helpline at 866-978-1799; or
- 2) you can go to [connectnebraska.net](http://connectnebraska.net) and complete the form under the tab, ‘Opt Out or Opt Back In’. Whatever method you choose, your opt-out decision cannot be implemented until after you have had your first visit as a patient. Until then, NeHII has no health record for you and no way to match your opt-out decision to you.

## Can I hold back certain records I don’t want my health insurer or other providers to see?

**No.** NeHII is not set up to exclude specific visits, tests or episodes of care or to prevent access by specific providers or health insurers. Opting out generally means that no one will be able to access your health information through NeHII, except as described in this brochure. If you don’t want some or all of your health information made available to participating providers, health insurers or public health agencies through NeHII, you should consider opting out of NeHII and not participating at all.

## If I opt out, can I change my mind later?

**Yes.** If you opt out, you may change your mind and revoke that choice. Call the NeHII help line, or visit the NeHII website or talk to your provider for help with this action. Be aware that when you revoke your earlier decision to opt out, all of the information that has been gathered by participating providers, health insurers and public health agencies since you opted out will be available for sharing through NeHII.



Participation in NeHII is completely free to patients.

# Connect the “Docs”

## Where can I get more information?

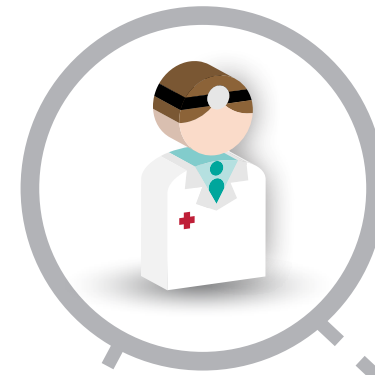
You can get help understanding NeHII and your rights and the most up-to-date copy of this brochure by:

- **Calling the NeHII help line at 866-978-1799;**
- **Visiting the NeHII website at [www.connectnebraska.net](http://www.connectnebraska.net);**
- **Talking to your participating provider or health insurer.**

Note: NeHII and the participating providers and health insurers reserve the right to change policies and the information in this brochure over time. Check the NeHII web site for the most current version and information.

# Connect the “Docs”

Sharing information for better health care



Participating in the Nebraska Health Information Initiative (NeHII) is voluntary. However, your health information will be included in NeHII unless you opt out. If you do not wish to participate, you must opt out. Please read this notice carefully and decide if you wish to participate. It is your information and your choice. This service is completely free to patients.

### What is NeHII?

NeHII is a state-wide, internet-based, health information exchange. NeHII is sponsored by Nebraska health care providers and health insurers who share and use your information for treatment and payment purposes. Using NeHII, participating providers and health insurers can see certain health, demographic and payment information (your health information) in each other's records. They can use this information for treatment and payment purposes. For example:

- Using NeHII, your participating doctors can quickly find certain health information about you, such as your lab and x-ray results, from other participating providers who have treated you in the past.
- Using NeHII, your participating doctors, hospital or pharmacy can quickly verify your insurance coverage by checking your enrollment status with participating health insurers.
- Using NeHII, your participating providers can make required reports to public health agencies regarding immunizations, communicable diseases, etc.
- Using NeHII, your participating health insurer can electronically obtain health information needed to process your claim from the records of participating providers.
- Using NeHII, researchers can use de-identified information and/or limited data sets to conduct research to improve health care for all Nebraskans. A "limited data set" is health information that has had direct patient identifiers removed.

### How does sharing health information improve patient care?

Health care providers need your health information to accurately diagnose and treat you. Each of your providers may have different portions of your medical record. If they can access each other's records and see more complete health information, they can provide you with better care. Sharing your health information can also help reduce your costs by eliminating unnecessary duplication of tests and procedures.

### How is my health information currently shared?

Currently, your health information may be shared between health care providers and insurers by telephone, fax, mail, or through limited computer networks. These processes take time and may impose a burden on you or your provider but still not provide a complete record. NeHII automates the process of searching. **NeHII makes the process of sharing health information more efficient; it generally does not change what information is shared.** NeHII allows one participant (for example, a doctor) to locate records from another participant (for example, a hospital) in a matter of minutes. This can be critical in an emergency and may result in your providers having a more complete and accurate health record. NeHII will also allow population based research on a broader scale than is currently possible without sharing patient identified information.

### Who will have access to my health information?

Many Nebraska providers and health insurers participate in NeHII. You can obtain a current list at [www.connectnebraska.net](http://www.connectnebraska.net). Participating providers (such as doctors, hospitals and pharmacies) and health insurers (for their own insureds or for insureds in group health plans they administer), public health agencies, and their staffs and contractors will have access for treatment, payment and public health purposes. NeHII staff and contractors will have access to provide technical and administrative support. All access will be on a need-to-know basis for treatment, payment and public health purposes. Medical researchers may have access to certain de-identified health information and/or limited data sets.



### What health information will be shared?

Lab and x-ray results, medication and immunization history, transcribed diagnostic and treatment records, records of allergies and drug reactions, and other transcribed clinical reports created after the start date of NeHII in 2009 will be available through NeHII, but only if the provider who has the information is a participating provider and makes the information available. Older health records will not be available through NeHII. Participating providers will generally not share records related to: (a) alcohol or substance abuse treatment programs (or information likely to be used by such programs), (b) emergency protective custody proceedings, (c) predictive genetic testing performed for genetic counseling purposes, (d) HIV testing, (e) STD testing or treatment of minors consented to by the minor, and (f) mental health treatment in Iowa. However, information about test results may be available or referred to elsewhere in the record. With respect to information shared for research purposes, information that specifically identifies you will not be shared.

### How is my privacy protected?

NeHII and the participating providers and health insurers use a combination of safeguards to protect your health information. Technical safeguards include encryption, password protection, and the ability to track every viewer's usage of the system. Administrative safeguards include written policies controlling access to information through NeHII. All participating providers and health insurers must agree to follow these policies. All participating providers and health insurers are also regulated by federal and state privacy laws. They must have their own policies and other safeguards in place, including policies to train their staffs and limit access to those with a need to know the information.

### Are there privacy risks?

**Yes.** There is always a risk that the safeguards will not work and that someone will obtain, view or use your health information for impermissible purposes. No system of safeguards is perfect – neither NeHII's nor those currently employed by your providers or health insurers. The electronic search capability of NeHII and the large number of participating providers and health insurers and their staffs will increase the risk of a privacy or security breach. Although NeHII can audit and identify each authorized user who has accessed your record, this cannot prevent unauthorized access. The participating providers and health insurers believe the potential benefits outweigh the risk, but your participation is a personal decision you must make for yourself.