

FAQ for Patients on Behavioral Health Data Sharing

This document provides important information about how your health information is shared in DC's Health Information Exchange (HIE), called CRISP. An HIE is a way of instantly sharing health information among doctors' offices, hospitals, labs, radiology centers, and other healthcare organizations.

What is CRISP?

CRISP is the designated Health Information Exchange (HIE) in Maryland and a registered HIE in the District of Columbia. CRISP allows your providers and organizations coordinating your care to view your medical history. For example, providers can review recent lab results or see information about your recent hospital visits.

There's a very real benefit to you when healthcare providers share information, including:

- Better care coordination with all members of your care community
- Improved safety by reducing medication and medical mistakes
- Less forms to fill out
- Less testing that isn't needed
- Better healthcare quality and results for you
- Reduced costs

How is my data kept safe?

CRISP's priority is to keep all of your health information secure. CRISP follows all state and federal laws. Also, any provider that uses CRISP agrees to keep your data safe and not share it with anyone not allowed to see it. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) is the main law that governs health data sharing.¹

CRISP uses advanced security measures to keep your healthcare data private and secure. Additionally, CRISP relies on an advisory board composed of industry experts and patients to help shape our privacy and security programs. These programs help CRISP keep your data safe and only seen by individuals who should see it to improve your care.

Can I request that my information not be shared?

You can decide whether or not CRISP shares your health information. You can request that your information not be shared via CRISP (opt-out) at any time. If you do this, doctors and nurses will not be able to search for your health records through CRISP and your information will not be available in an emergency. Any information shared on CRISP prior to the time you opted-out will not be affected and may still be shared. Please talk to your provider for more information.

¹ https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/consumers/consumer_rights.pdf

I am receiving mental health services. Does CRISP share this information?

As allowed by DC law – the Mental Health Information Amendment Act of 2018, your mental health information may be shared on CRISP.² Any provider you see that has access to CRISP will be able to view this information. This data may also be shared with your health plan.

If you do not want your mental health information to be shared among your providers and health plan, you can request that your information not be shared via CRISP any time (opt-out). Please ask for help at your mental health provider’s office to do this. In some cases, your provider may require you to opt-out of CRISP to make sure your mental health information is not shared. If you opt-out of CRISP, none of your health information will be shared for purposes of coordinating your care and treatment.

I am receiving services for substance use disorder (SUD). Does CRISP share that information?

Your substance use disorder records are protected under federal law per 42 CFR Part 2.³ This law applies to any individual or entity that is federally assisted and provides alcohol or drug abuse diagnosis, treatment, or referral for treatment. Any program that meets this definition cannot share your SUD treatment information without your approval and written consent. If you provide consent, you can specify what information you want to be shared with your other providers. At this time, CRISP does not have any SUD treatment information nor share any of this information because we do not have a way to receive your consent. Please note, however, in most cases Part 2 does not cover services provided in an emergency department. Therefore, CRISP may share information about substance use or potential overdose that occurs during any visits to the emergency department.

Where can I go for more information?

Please visit <https://crisphealth.org/for-patients-your-rights/> to learn more about your rights and how you can opt-out of CRISP.

If you have additional questions, please speak with your health care provider.

For more information about the CRISP HIE, visit www.crisphealth.org.

² L22-0244 - Effective March 13, 2019. <http://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B22-0742>

³ <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/fags-applying-confidentiality-regulations-to-hie.pdf>