



Patient Frequently Asked Questions

Who is CRISP?

The Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP) is a non-profit, community-run organization that has been formally designated as Maryland's statewide health information exchange by the Maryland Health Care Commission. CRISP is developing a secure, electronic **statewide health information exchange (HIE)** that gives authorized healthcare providers in Maryland and surrounding areas, **access to essential patient information such as test results, lab reports, radiology reports, electronic reports, and more.**

CRISP has been developed by and for healthcare providers, hospital systems, health insurers and privacy officers throughout Maryland. Its governance structure is intended to be broad and inclusive, and relies on input from stakeholders from more than 20 organizations. The state and federal government are promoting the creation of HIEs in a movement toward national standards for secure electronic exchange of health information.

How much will all of this cost, and who's paying for it?

In 2009, CRISP received a \$10 million state grant through Maryland's unique all-payer rate setting system. This is not an appropriation of taxpayer funds, but rather an allocation of a small portion of insurance dollars used to reimburse hospitals for medical services. This funding has allowed CRISP to accomplish many objectives. The Maryland Health Care Commission has also received \$9.3 million in federal stimulus funding to support CRISP's rollout.

What area is being served by CRISP? Who runs it?

CRISP serves the entire state of Maryland and some surrounding areas. Its board is comprised of health professionals and business people representing Erickson Retirement Communities, Johns Hopkins Healthcare, MedStar Health, University of Maryland Medical System, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Community Physicians and Health Plans. CRISP's governance structure, including the policy board, receives input from a much larger set of stakeholders – more information can be found in the Governance section of the website. The president of CRISP is David Horrocks, a professional in health information technology with a master's degree in business administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

Why do we need a health information exchange?

People often visit many different offices, physicians and other providers when seeking help with a medical condition. With a fully operational health information exchange, or HIE, your information goes where you go.

This helps your physicians to **make more informed decisions** about your care and treatment with accurate, up to date information. It also helps to **eliminate repeated testing**, allows for easier second opinions, **reduces the risk of adverse drug reactions**, and minimizes errors caused by

hard-to-read handwriting and transcriptions. By allowing providers to work more efficiently, the HIE can help moderate the growing cost of healthcare.

[Who will be able to access my personal health information using CRISP?](#)

CRISP is being used by authorized healthcare and public health professionals to improve patient care. Healthcare professionals currently access clinical information for patients via postal mail, fax machines, and phone calls. The statewide HIE allows the same information to be exchanged faster and more efficiently using a secure online exchange. If they wish, patients may choose to opt out of the HIE by [clicking here](#).

[Does my insurance company have access to my health information via CRISP?](#)

The primary purpose of the health information exchange is to make prior medical records available to doctors and nurses who treat patients. We do, however, also notify care coordinators at a number of health plans in Maryland and Washington, D.C., when one of their members is hospitalized. It is important to note that this is information that your insurer regularly receives anyway, though CRISP helps for it to be delivered more quickly. Per their agreements with CRISP, these health plans may only use the information CRISP provides them on their members for care coordination or quality improvement purposes—such as to ensure proper follow-up care after a patient is discharged from a hospital. The information may not be used for payment or eligibility-determination purposes. Hospitalizations that are marked as “self pay” by the hospital registrar are filtered by CRISP and will not result in a notification to the patient’s health plan.

[Who provides clinical information to CRISP?](#)

Numerous healthcare organizations have committed to provide clinical information to the HIE, including hospitals, physician practices, reference labs, and radiology centers. CRISP is working with electronic health record (EHR) vendors and individual physician practices to enable connectivity with all providers in the state.

[How will physicians and medical providers use my information?](#)

Your electronic health information will be used by participating providers to:

- Provide you with medical treatment and related services
- Conduct important public health functions, such as infectious disease monitoring
- Improve the quality of medical care provided to all patients

[How do I know if my physician participates in the HIE?](#)

If your physician is a participant, he or she will have informational brochures (including information on how you can opt-out) for you to review when you visit their office. You can also view a list of organizations providing data on our website <https://crisphealth.org/FOR-PROVIDERS/Participating-Organizations>

[What if my physician is not a participant?](#)

If you visit a physician who is not yet a participant, you are welcome to encourage him or her to join. Providers can contact CRISP for more information at outreach@crisphealth.org

[Will my physician or hospital be required to take part in the statewide HIE?](#)

Not immediately, but in the future it appears likely that exchanging electronic health information will become a standard practice for healthcare providers. The Maryland medical community has a long tradition of working cooperatively to better serve patients.

[What if I don't want my medical information available through the statewide HIE?](#)

Patients can choose not to make their information searchable in the HIE by opting out. For most people, this information is already being shared by phone, fax or hard-copy as part of their patient care. It is important to note that the care you receive from your physician will not change by not participating in the HIE. For more information on opting out, please [click here](#).

[What if I want to exclude a certain lab test or medical procedure from the exchange or choose to pay out of pocket for a given procedure so that my insurance company will not know about it?](#)

The HIE is not set up to exclude specific visits or certain types of data from the health information exchange. Information about you shared over the HIE for clinical purposes may relate to sensitive health conditions, although the HIE is not currently receiving health information directly from substance abuse or mental health providers.

[What security will there be to prevent unauthorized access to health information?](#)

CRISP employs role-based security with sophisticated information safeguards. Encryption, password protection, the ability to track every viewer and other safeguards protect against unauthorized use of the HIE. The policies that govern the operation of the exchange have been created with the oversight of a policy board that includes compliance officers from hospitals in the region, regional and national information technology experts, consumer advocates, and representatives of state government.

[Will CRISP help me in a medical emergency?](#)

Yes. In a medical emergency, you are likely to be seen by physicians who are not familiar with your medical history. These physicians would be able to access your medication history, recent tests, and other information that will help them provide you with better care.

[What if I still have questions?](#)

You can contact CRISP directly by emailing info@crisphealth.org.