

State Health Information Guidance

Introduction & Description

The State Health Information Guidance (SHIG) is an authoritative but non-binding guidance from the State of California written in lay language for a general audience. The SHIG explains when, where, and why mental health and substance use disorder information can be exchanged. It also provides clarification of state and federal laws for non-state entities. The document is the product of the California Office of Health Information Integrity (CalOHII), which has statutory authority to interpret and clarify state law.

The SHIG is needed because there is confusion about the law that creates major barriers to sharing patient information. Providers often default to not sharing information because of uncertainty, risk avoidance, and liability concerns, even when it is legal to share information among health care providers. The appropriate and legal exchange of patient information helps support the triple aim: improving patient outcomes, improving overall patient satisfaction, and improving efficiency and reducing costs for organizations. The SHIG is broad in its scope, and is applicable to Physical Health Care Providers, Mental Health Care Providers, Substance Use Disorder Providers, Emergency Service Providers, Caregivers and Care Coordinators, Social Services, Law Enforcement, and Payers.

The SHIG grew out of comprehensive research, drawing from the Advisory Group, a broad group of stakeholders that reflect cross-industry insights and experience, to get a clear understanding of the problems different groups were facing in the field. The result of the research is the SHIG, a guidance containing 22 scenarios derived from real user stories, which clarify how laws and statutes apply to actual situations that arise for health care providers.

The SHIG is a first step, laying the groundwork for an ongoing dialogue on how to improve appropriate sharing of health information. It provides the known path to YES.

Attend an online webinar, or download the SHIG and associated resources online. For more information visit: www.chhs.ca.gov/ohii/pages/shig.aspx.