

State of California HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY



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SECRETARY



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California Office of Health Information Integrity Announces Guidance to Help Promote Sharing of Patient Health Information

SACRAMENTO – The California Office of Health Information Integrity (CalOHII) today announced guidance on how behavioral healthcare providers can safely share substance use disorder and mental health patient records. The [State Health Information Guidance](#) (SHIG) is authoritative but non-binding guidance that explains when and where mental health and substance use disorder records can be exchanged between providers involved in coordinating patient care.

“This guidance is timely and important to the further adoption of health information exchange,” said Daniel Chavez, Executive Director of San Diego Health Connect. “The guidance comprehensively addresses concerns and barriers regarding what can be shared and under what circumstances, while protecting patient privacy.”

Currently, there is some confusion among providers about patient privacy laws, which can create barriers to sharing patient information. Often, providers default to not sharing this information due to uncertainty and perceived liability risk, even when it is legal to share information among providers.

“This guidance is a huge step towards removing regulatory uncertainty that has prevented organizations from sharing these records,” said Robert Cothren, Executive Director of the California Association of Health Information Exchanges. “Sharing mental health and substance use disorder information is a critical component of the complete picture of an individual’s health.”

The SHIG grew from comprehensive research drawn from a broad group of stakeholders and reflects cross-industry insights and experience. This guidance is a first step, laying the groundwork for an ongoing dialogue on how to continue to improve the appropriate sharing of health information. The SHIG is broad in 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.

Two informational webinars are scheduled to further explain the SHIG and its uses.

July 13, 2017, 10:00 am PST:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3545587832725653763>

July 25, 2017, 2:00 pm PST:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3718667455612327427>

Click [here](#) to learn more about the SHIG or email at shiginformation@ohi.ca.gov.

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