

Notice to Patients about MSK's Participation in Health Information Exchange through a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO)

MSK is now taking part in a Regional Health Information Organization (RHIO). **This notice describes what a RHIO is, how it works, and explains your choices as our patient. Please read it carefully so that you can make an informed choice.** At your next visit, you may be asked to complete a consent form. As an alternative, you can sign up for MyMSK patient portal by calling MyMSK Helpdesk at 1-800-248-0593 and complete the form online.

What is a RHIO?

A RHIO is an organization that lets health care providers securely share and access a patient's health information electronically. Most people receive medical care from more than one provider, including hospitals, clinics, or home care agencies. Each provider keeps its own medical record about a patient. A RHIO allows your providers to share your medical information with each other electronically. The goal is to provide you with safer, faster, and more efficient care.

How Does the RHIO Work?

MSK is taking part in a RHIO operated by Healthix, a company that provides the structure and support for the RHIO. Healthix will connect MSK to the State Health Information Network for New York, known as the SHIN-NY. The SHIN-NY will allow all RHIOs in New York State to connect and exchange information. This is done securely and electronically to protect your privacy.

The Healthix RHIO is regulated by the New York State Department of Health, and Healthix is obligated to follow New York State and Federal privacy and confidentiality laws. To learn more about the Privacy & Security of your information in the RHIO, see the enclosed **MSK RHIO Frequently Asked Questions**.

How Does the RHIO Help Me?

With your written permission, also called consent, any provider involved in your care can see the medical information about you that is in the state-wide RHIO. For example, your MSK doctor would be able to see your past medical treatments, medications you take, and tests done by your non-MSK providers who also take part in a NY RHIO. This can help your MSK doctor to make better and faster decisions about your care at MSK, and may help avoid unnecessary tests. Likewise, if you go to another hospital that takes part in a NY RHIO, your providers at the other hospital would be able to see information about your care at MSK.

The types of information MSK will send to the RHIO are known as a “minimum data set”. The minimum data set is the group of documents that the New York State Department of Health has determined must be shared for health information exchange. These documents will include:

- (1) information such as your full name, date of birth, gender, address (called demographic information)
- (2) the appointments you have had
- (3) your medical problems
- (4) the medications you take
- (5) any allergies you have to medications
- (6) surgeries and procedures you have had
- (7) the results of those surgeries and procedures and other laboratory tests, such as blood work.

To learn more about the type of information available in the RHIO, see the enclosed **MSK RHIO Frequently Asked Questions**.

It’s Your Choice

You decide who can see your medical information.

Each provider taking part in a NY RHIO must obtain your consent separately in order to see your medical information through the RHIO. Your consent allows your provider to see your medical information from the RHIO. You decide whether you want a provider to see your medical information. You can give consent to some providers and not to others. You can also choose not to allow any providers who participate in Healthix to see your information in the RHIO.

With every provider who takes part in Healthix, you have three options:

- 1) I Give Consent.** If you choose this option, you are giving permission to your MSK provider to see information about you from your other providers in the RHIO. This information may be used by MSK to care for you and to improve the quality of your care.
- 2) I Deny Consent Except in a Medical Emergency.** If you choose this option, your provider will only be able to see your medical information through Healthix in an emergency. At MSK, this will mean that your MSK providers will not see your information in the RHIO for any other reason, so it cannot be used as part of your regular care at MSK. Very few situations are emergencies. For example, your MSK providers will only be able to see your health information in the RHIO if you are admitted to the Urgent Care Center and are unable to communicate with your providers on your own.
- 3) I Deny Consent.** If you do not want your providers to access your medical information through Healthix – even in an emergency – please mark that you deny consent. To deny consent means you do not give consent. If you deny consent at MSK, your MSK providers will not be able to see any information about you from the RHIO, including information that could be helpful in caring for you during an emergency.

If you do not make a choice, MSK will only be allowed to see your information in the RHIO in an emergency, as described in choice 2, above.

MSK sharing your information with the RHIO:

Unless you tell us not to, MSK will share information about you with the RHIO beginning 30 days from when you receive this notice. You will always have control over which providers outside of MSK can see that information by signing a consent form at each provider you visit. As described above, you can give consent to some providers and not to others, or you can deny consent for all providers who participate in Healthix.

At MSK, we are also giving you another choice. If you do not want MSK to share any of your medical information from MSK with the RHIO, you can tell us not to. This is called “opt-out.” However, if you opt-out, your MSK providers will also not be able to see any information about you from the RHIO. This would mean you are not allowing MSK to share or see any information about you through the RHIO. If you want to opt-out, please contact MSK at 646-227-2942 or email optoutrhio@mskcc.org

RHIO Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Regional Health Information organization (RHIO)?

A RHIO is an organization that lets health care providers securely share and access a patient's health information electronically. Most people receive medical care from more than one provider, including hospitals, clinics, or home care agencies. Each provider keeps its own medical record about a patient. A RHIO allows your providers to share your medical information with each other electronically. The goal is to provide you with safer, faster, and more efficient care.

How does the RHIO work?

Each provider who participates in a RHIO sends certain information about you to the centralized database. The data from each of these providers is maintained in a secure database. With your consent, any providers whom you choose to allow access to your information may see all of the information about you in the RHIO. For more detailed information about your choices, see the FAQ below, titled "Do I Have a Choice?"

In which RHIO or RHIOs is MSK participating?

Right now, MSK is participating in a New York RHIO operated by Healthix, a company that provides the structure and support for the RHIO. By March 2017, all RHIOs in New York State will connect to the New York State-wide health information exchange known as the "State Health Information Network for New York (SHIN-NY)." The SHIN-NY will allow all RHIOs in New York State to connect and exchange information with each other. This is done securely and electronically to protect your privacy.

MSK also expects to soon participate in a New Jersey RHIO to better serve our patients in the New Jersey area.

As a patient at MSK, why should I participate? How does this benefit me?

With your written permission, also called consent, any provider involved in your care who takes part in a RHIO in New York State can see the medical information about you that is in the state-wide RHIO. For example, your MSK doctor would be able to see your past medical treatments, medications you take, and tests done by your non-MSK providers who also take part in a NY RHIO. This can help your MSK doctor to make better and faster decisions about your care at MSK, and may help avoid unnecessary tests.

Likewise, if you go to another hospital that takes part in a NY RHIO, and you give your permission, your providers at the other hospital would be able to see information about your care at MSK.

Do I Have a Choice?

Yes, you have choices about who can see your medical information.

Each provider taking part in a NY RHIO must obtain your consent separately in order to see your medical information through the RHIO. Your consent allows your provider to see your medical information from the RHIO. You decide whether you want a provider to see your medical information. You can give consent to some providers and not to others. You can also choose not to allow any providers who participate in Healthix to see your information in the RHIO.

You have three choices:

1) I Give Consent.

If you choose this option, you are giving permission to your MSK provider to see information about you from your other providers in the RHIO. This information may be used by MSK to care for you and to improve the quality of your care.

2) I Deny Consent Except in a Medical Emergency.

If you choose this option, your provider will only be able to see your medical information through Healthix in an emergency. At MSK, this will mean that your MSK providers will not see your information in the RHIO for any other reason, so it cannot be used as part of your regular care at MSK. Very few situations are emergencies. For example, your MSK providers will only be able to see your health information in the RHIO if you are admitted to the Urgent Care Center and are unable to communicate with your providers on your own.

3) I Deny Consent.

If you do not want your providers to access your medical information through Healthix – even in an emergency – please mark that you deny consent. To deny consent means you do not give consent. If you deny consent at MSK, your MSK providers will not be able to see any information about you from the RHIO, including information that could be helpful in caring for you during an emergency.

If you do not make a choice, MSK will only be allowed to see your information in the RHIO in an emergency, as described in choice 2, above.

Your MSK providers would still be able to exchange information about you with your non-MSK providers through other methods permitted by law, such as by telephone or fax.

If you want to deny consent for all Providers and Health Plans participating in Healthix to access your electronic health information through Healthix, you may do so by calling Healthix at 877-695-4749.

Can I decide if MSK will share information about me with the RHIO?

Unless you tell us not to, MSK will share information about you with the RHIO beginning 30 days from when you receive this notice. You will always have control over which providers outside of MSK can see that information by signing a consent form at each provider you visit. At MSK, we are also giving you another choice. If you do not want MSK to share any of your medical information from MSK with the RHIO, you can tell us not to. This is called “opt-out.” However, if you opt-out, your MSK providers will

also not be able to see any information about you from the RHIO. This would mean you are not allowing MSK to share or see any information about you through the RHIO.

Can I change my mind later?

Yes, you can change your decision at any time.

If you want to change your mind about who may see your information, you may submit a new consent form to MSK with your new choice. You may also contact Healthix to change your choice about all participating providers by filling out a Withdrawal of Consent Form from Healthix. Providers that access your health information through Healthix while your consent is in effect may copy or include your information in their own medical records. Even if you later decide to change your consent decision they are not required to return your information or remove it from their records.

If you want to change your mind about MSK sharing your information with the RHIO, you may call 646-227-2942 or email RHIO@mskcc.org to tell us that you would like to change your mind. You may be asked to complete a form to confirm your new choice.

How will my information from the RHIO be used by MSK?

Your electronic health information in the RHIO may be used by MSK only for the following healthcare purposes:

- **Treatment Services.** To provide you with medical treatment and related services.
- **Care Management Activities.** These include assisting you in obtaining appropriate medical care, improving the quality of services provided to you, coordinating the provision of multiple health care services provided to you, or supporting you in following a plan of medical care.
- **Quality Improvement Activities.** To evaluate and improve the quality of medical care provided to you and all patients.

Who can see my information in the RHIO?

Your information can only be seen by doctors and other staff members of the provider(s) whom you have given permission to see your information in the RHIO, as well as by public health officials who are otherwise legally allowed to see patient information without patient consent. You control which healthcare providers can view your patient data by completing a consent form and granting (or denying) consent to access your records on an organization by organization basis. If you grant your consent to MSK, MSK providers who are involved in your care and authorized individuals involved in improving the quality of your medical care will be permitted to access your information from the RHIO. You can also decide which other providers outside of MSK will be permitted to access your information.

The types of providers who participate in RHIOs include medical practices, hospitals, laboratories, nursing homes, home care agencies, and others. For a complete list of providers who participate in Healthix, visit <http://healthix.org/wp-content/uploads/Healthix-Participant-List.pdf>

What information will MSK send to the RHIO?

MSK will send a group of documents known as a “minimum data set”. The minimum data set is the group of documents that the New York State Department of Health has decided must be shared for health information exchange. These documents will include:

- (1) information such as your full name, date of birth, gender, address (called “demographic information”)
- (2) the appointments you have had (these are called “encounters”),
- (3) your medical problems,
- (4) the medications you take,
- (5) any allergies you have to medications,
- (6) surgeries and procedures you have had, (these are called “procedures”) and
- (7) the results of those surgeries and procedures and other laboratory tests, such as blood work.

At this time, MSK will not share other categories of information, such as genetic test results or pathology reports. If in the future MSK determines that such additional types of data should be shared, you will be informed of the change in practice and will have an opportunity to change your choices. Other providers participating in the RHIO may choose to share other types of information in addition to the minimum data set. As a result, the information available from other providers or on the Healthix website may list other categories of information.

Your information is kept private and secure. Only authorized individuals who provide or coordinate your care can access your information with your consent.

What types of information can be seen through the RHIO?

The information about you that is available through the RHIO will depend on what information each of your providers sends.

As described more fully in the FAQ titled “What information will MSK send to the RHIO?” the information that MSK will share about you with the RHIO will be limited to the “minimum data set” categories which include Demographics, Encounters, Problems, Diagnoses, Medications, Allergies, Procedures, and Laboratory Results.

Other providers participating in the RHIO may choose to share other types of information in addition to the minimum data set. As a result, the Healthix website may list other categories of information that are available through the RHIO. These may include radiology or pathology results, and if you provide consent, other potentially sensitive information about you related to HIV/AIDS, mental health, genetic disease or tests, alcohol or drug abuse, sexually transmitted diseases and family planning.

Can I control what categories of medical information are shared or seen?

Unfortunately, the RHIO does not allow you to decide which categories of information will be shared or accessed by your providers. If you give permission for MSK to access your information in the RHIO, authorized users at MSK will be able to see any information about you that is in the RHIO. Similarly, if you choose to opt-out of having MSK share information about you with the RHIO, no information about you will be shared.

How is my privacy protected?

The Healthix RHIO is regulated by the New York State Department of Health, and Healthix is obligated to follow New York State and Federal privacy and confidentiality laws. MSK and other providers who take part in the RHIO are also required to follow New York State and Federal privacy and confidentiality laws. Providers who take part in the RHIO are only allowed to look at your health information through Healthix if they are involved in giving you care or improving the quality of medical care they deliver to their patients. Healthix has protections in place to prevent your medical information from being seen by others for improper purposes.

What if I have concerns about my Privacy?

If you have concerns about the privacy and security of your information in the RHIO, you may contact the MSK Privacy Office at 646-227-2056 or privacy@mskcc.org. You may also contact Healthix directly at info@healthix.org.

If you are concerned that someone at MSK has accessed your information from the RHIO without permission, you may request that MSK perform an audit of access to your information. To request an audit, please contact MSK's Privacy Office at 646-227-2056 or privacy@mskcc.org. If you have concerns about access to your information by a non-MSK provider and would like an audit, you may contact Healthix directly at info@healthix.org.

I still have questions, how can I receive more information about Healthix?

For further information about Healthix, please visit the Healthix website at www.healthix.org. You may also contact Healthix at info@healthix.org.