ABOUT YOUR PRIVACY

Many people are worried about privacy and security when it comes to eHealth. Information can never be completely secure. This is true whether it's on paper or in a computer. But New York State is doing everything it can to make eHealth private and secure:

- Federal and state laws strictly protect the privacy and confidentiality of health information about you. New York State is requiring eHealth networks and everyone who uses them to follow the same rules to protect the privacy and security of records shared through this system.

- Only the people (such as doctors, nurses, and their staff) who are involved in your health care are allowed to access your health records using eHealth, and only if you sign a consent form. Others, such as employers and immigration agencies, won't have access to your information.

- Safeguards like passwords and other protections keep your records from being accessed without proper permission.

- You can request a list of everyone who has accessed your records using eHealth.

- If improper access does occur, you will be told, and New York State will make sure steps are taken to correct the problem so it won't happen again.

Q: Can I get access to my own medical records through eHealth?

A: By law you already have the right to get a copy of your medical records from the healthcare organizations that made them. Some doctors, hospitals, and other healthcare organizations in New York can give you access to your medical records online or on a computer, not just on paper – but not all of them have that capability today. New York State is working to make it possible for everyone to get access to their medical records through eHealth networks.

In addition, many public and private organizations are developing eHealth tools that you may be able to use to keep and share your health information on a computer.

Q: Where can I get more information about eHealth in New York?

A: www.ehealth4ny.org
A web site developed for the public by the Legal Action Center

www.health.state.ny.us/technology
The New York State Department of Health's Office of Health Information Technology Transformation

www.nyehealth.org
The New York eHealth Collaborative

Or call:

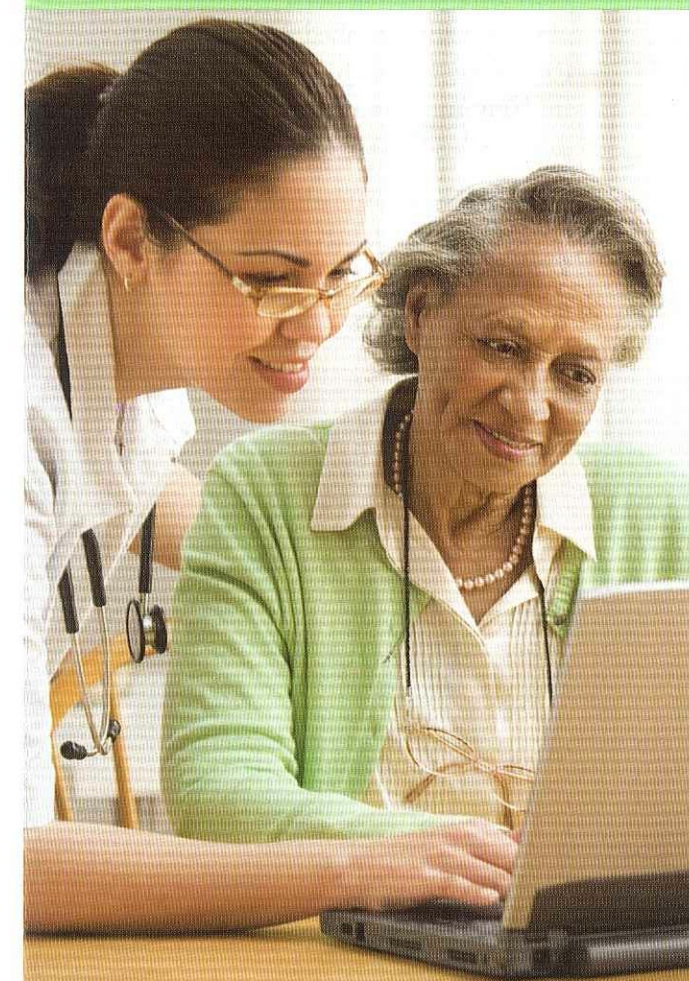**877-690-2211**

ehealth4ny

www.ehealth4ny.org

State of New York

Department of Health

5600

3/09

Better Information means Better Care

A guide to eHealth for New Yorkers

Q: What is eHealth in New York?

A: eHealth is the use of a computer network, instead of paper, to store and manage your medical records. eHealth is also sometimes called "health information technology." In eHealth networks, you can make information about your health available electronically to doctors and other care providers you choose, which can help you get better care.

New York is rolling out a statewide eHealth network called the SHIN-NY (Statewide Health Information Network for New York) to improve the quality and safety of health care for New Yorkers.

The SHIN-NY is made up of smaller networks called RHIOs (Regional Health Information Organizations). RHIOs get and share information about patients from such places as hospitals, physicians, pharmacies, clinical laboratories, health insurers, and the Medicaid program.

Q: What can eHealth do for me?

A: eHealth can help pave the way for safer, more convenient health care.

Medical records are reports about your illnesses, injuries, medicines and/or test results. If you've changed doctors, seen a specialist, visited a clinic, or checked into a hospital, your records are likely on paper and in different places. This makes it hard to get a complete picture of your health. eHealth can help to solve that problem for New Yorkers.

Here's how eHealth can help you:

- When your records are easily available in one place on a computer, your doctors can get a more complete picture of your health, which helps them to make good decisions about your care.

- Your information is safe in a system that can only be used by the people who are caring for you, and only with your consent.

- Information that could save your life in a medical emergency is easy to get to in a hurry.

- You can skip wasteful and sometimes risky duplicate medical tests.

- You won't always have to fill out the same forms every time you visit a doctor, clinic, or a hospital.

- Backups of your records are made so they will still be available in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

- You can better manage health records for yourself and your family.

Q: Do I have a choice about eHealth?

A: Yes. You have the right to say "YES" or "NO" to participating in eHealth. Doctors and others involved in your care may see and share your health information through New York's eHealth network only if you say they can by giving your consent. Sharing your medical information using eHealth cannot happen unless you sign a consent form.

For most people, the potential benefits of eHealth outweigh the risks, but every person is free to make the choice that is right for him or her.