HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR IMPLEMENTING PATIENT CONSENT

The purpose of this document is intended to provide participating organizations with key recommendations (e.g., tips, reminders, etc.) for successfully implementing the Health Information Exchange's patient consent requirements within existing workflows.

<u>Tips & Reminders for Implementing Patient Consent:</u>

1. Develop separate patient consent workflows for (a) current patients and (b) new patients.

    a. <u>Current patient workflow</u>: Assign a staff member(s) to complete the consent process with current patients. If your organization chooses more than one staff member to be responsible for this activity, be sure to track on paper or through your EHR which current patients have been properly educated so that those patients don't need to listen to the process multiple times.

    b. <u>New patient workflow</u>: Make patient consent a part of your organization's new patient intake processes so that you don't have to backtrack to complete an activity that fits nicely into registration workflows.

2. Unlike other releases of health information with which your organization may be familiar, patients only need to complete HealthInfoNet's general medical opt-out form if they <u>do not</u> want to share their general medical information with HealthInfoNet and the Health Information Exchange (HIE).

    a. If patients want to continue to share their general medical information with the HIE, they do not need to take any action.

3. Patients who have previously opted-out of sharing their general medical information with HealthInfoNet can always choose to opt-back-in to sharing their information by completing HealthInfoNet's general medical opt-out revoke form.

    a. HealthInfoNet offers a "zero resistance" approach to consent, meaning patients can choose to opt-out and opt-back-in to sharing the health information at any time.

4. If a patient would like to opt-in to sharing their sensitive health information (i.e., mental health information) with HealthInfoNet, there is a separate sensitive health information opt-in form that they must complete.

    a. Before a patient signs the sensitive health information opt-in form, confirm that they haven't previously opted-out of sharing their general medical information with HealthInfoNet, as that decision prevails over any subsequent decision regarding sensitive health information sharing.

    b. If a patient has previously opted-out of sharing their general medical information, but would like to share their sensitive health information, they must first opt-back-in to sharing their general medical information with HealthInfoNet then opt-in to sharing their sensitive health information.

5. If a patient opts-out of sharing their general medical information with HealthInfoNet, we will send them a communication (either via physical mail or via e-mail) indicating that their request has been completed.

    a. Upon execution of a patient's opt-out form, the information that they opted-out of sharing with us will no longer be available in our systems. At this time, their data is completely removed from HealthInfoNet's systems. If they then decide to opt-back-in to sharing their information, we will begin collecting it again from that date (i.e., opt-back-in) going forward. In other words, their health history prior to their initial opt-out decision does not get added back to their record upon their decision to begin sharing their information again with the HIE.

    b. HealthInfoNet does not send communication confirmation to patients who choose to opt-back-in to sharing their general medical information or opt-in to sharing their sensitive health information, unless specifically requested by a patient.

6. Do not alter HealthInfoNet's consent forms to align with your organization's documentation standards. If a consent form is submitted with verbiage or in a format that differs from its original state developed by HealthInfoNet, there may result in delays in processing the consent form within the two-business day processing requirement.

7. Before sending a consent form to HealthInfoNet, ensure that all required fields are completed, including providing witness information if applicable. Incomplete forms are unable to be processed and may be sent back to the sender to complete.

8. Remember to review and use materials provided in HealthInfoNet's Communication Package when conveying the purpose and value of HealthInfoNet and the state of Maine's HIE, including a template script that staff can use to field common questions from patients.

    a. But, as always, remember that you do not need to be an expert of HealthInfoNet's systems! Our Clinical Education team is here to support your organization's staff when they have questions. Simply reach out to us via phone (1-866-592-4352 (toll free), 207-541-9250 (local)) or email (clienteducation@hinfonet.org) and we'll help find the right answer!