

Partner for Quality Care:
Explanation to Patients and Procedures for
Choosing Non-Participation



Partner for Quality Care: Information for a Healthy Oregon is a non-profit initiative that gives doctors and the public information they can use for high quality health care. This document describes the purpose of the *Partner for Quality Care* activity and the legal and technical steps that are taken to assure that patient information is carefully managed at all times. It also includes instructions if a patient does not want his or her information to be included in the *Partner for Quality Care* process.

Initiative Description

Health insurance plans have information that is useful to a patient's health care team. For example, the plans can tell if women are getting screened for breast cancer as often as they should. As another example, the health plans can use the requests for payment they receive from pharmacies to ask doctors if people with asthma are getting the right medicines. In the past, Oregon's health plans sent this information to doctors at different times, in different formats, with different conclusions about care quality. Doctors told health plans this doesn't work well.

Partner for Quality Care coordinates information from ten health plans so that doctors receive only one consolidated report. It's the same process; it's just better organized. There is one additional benefit to working together: the overall quality of care that each clinic provides can be measured and reported to the public.

Benefits to Patients

- Health care teams (doctors, nurses, medical assistants, etc.) can be certain each individual patient receives care that science shows is best for that patient.
- Doctors and clinics can learn what they do well, and what they can do to improve by studying their quality scores. This leads to better systems of care for patients.
- Patients will be able to see how well clinics perform at providing the best care and use this information to make decisions about their health care.
- When everyone works together – doctors, patients and health plans – patient care improves.

Protecting the Privacy and Security of Patients' Information:

Protecting the privacy and security of patients' health information is of highest importance to all of the organizations that participate in the *Partner for Quality Care* initiative. At *Partner for Quality Care* we do more than comply with privacy and security laws. We take every opportunity to make sure information is kept safe and is only seen by authorized, well-trained people.

Partner for Quality Care takes rigorous legal and technical steps to assure that patients' information is private and secure at all times. The health plans, the clinics and the data processor sign "business associate agreements" that spell out all the rules and requirements. The rules say what information is

shared, who has permission to see it, and how it is sent between computers. Only specially authorized individuals can see information about individual patients. All the staff in these organizations are thoroughly trained in the rules. These rules strictly specify that the information cannot be used for any other purpose or shared with anyone else. Not even the project organizers are ever allowed to see patients' information. These agreements provide serious punishments for violating the rules. Theft, tampering, lost data and inappropriate access are all highly unlikely because of the strict requirements. Should any of these occur, however, the rules say that every attempt will be made to notify each affected patient.

Patients' Rights

Partner for Quality Care: Information for a Healthy Oregon assumes that you agree to have the health care information from your insurance bills included – unless you say “no.” All patients have the right to keep their information from being included in *Partner for Quality Care: Information for a Healthy Oregon* if they choose. If you do not want your information to be sent to your health care team or included in measuring health care quality in Oregon, simply complete the attached form and send it to the address below. This action will not affect your medical care or insurance coverage in any way.

Concerns

If you have any concerns about how *Partner for Quality Care* protects the privacy and security of your health care information, you can write, telephone or email for more information:

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