

About Group Health's Health Risk Assessment (HRA), the Health Profile

Group Health's HRA, the Health Profile, collects clinically meaningful information about individual members. It asks questions that are normally part of a thorough medical history and is integrated with the member's electronic medical record (EMR). Once a member has completed and submitted a Health Profile, the responses are available to the member's care team through Epic, Group Health's EMR.

Responses to questions about current and past medical conditions, surgeries, medical procedures, and family history are automatically entered into the member's electronic medical history files.

When a member's Health Profile responses indicate a chronic condition and a need for current medical follow-up, the EMR system notifies the care team. Group Health has established protocols for care team follow up in these cases. The conditions to which this applies are asthma, COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease), diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and depression.

Only the member's care team, consisting of medical providers and nursing staff, has access to the member's medical record.

Benefits to the member of the Health Profile's integration with the medical record

Group Health's overall rationale for integrating the Health Profile with the EMR is that it supports the ability of clinicians to partner with members for success in individual health and wellness. We believe that most people want and expect their clinical care teams to be aware of their present health care needs and concerns, past medical conditions, and social context. Access to Health Profile results through the EMR makes this information readily available to the care team at the time it is needed.

Because completing the Health Profile enables members to send personal and family medical history information directly to their electronic record, integration offers members the opportunity to ensure that their record has accurate, current information.

When members complete a Health Profile before an office visit, clinicians are able to review a summary of patients' health-related behaviors, chronic conditions, and preventive care needs before the patient arrives. During the visit, the care team is then able to spend less time gathering and entering data, and more time discussing the member's current health concerns and questions.

Integration of the Health Profile with the EMR also means that when members have had specific screenings at Group Health facilities, such as for cholesterol, their Health Profile is pre-filled with the results of the most current screening.

Why the Health Profile results go into the medical record

In developing and implementing the Health Profile, Group Health carefully considered whether to offer members the opportunity to opt out of having their completed Health Profile results go into their electronic medical record. The decision not to offer such an option rests on our clinical and legal responsibility to our members. If members provide information in the Health Profile that Group Health could be expected to act upon for the member's benefit, we have an obligation to be aware of this and follow up in a clinically appropriate manner.

The Health Profile offers members the opportunity to decline to respond to specific questions in the categories of race, weight, sexual orientation, substance abuse, and sexual activity.

Members may also choose not to complete a Health Profile.

How Health Profile data is shared with an employer

Group Health shares only aggregated data with employers to give them a broad picture of their employees' health as a group. To protect the privacy of individual members, even aggregated data is shared only for groups of at least 10 members, and, then, only for response categories with at least 10 respondents.

As part of an employer sponsored incentive program, Group Health may, upon written request of the employer, verify that specific employees have completed a Health Profile. No personally identifiable health information is shared with the employer.

Impact of the Health Profile on a member's insurance coverage

The Health Profile is not used to guide insurance coverage decisions.

Effect of Federal and State Regulations

Personal health information about members is subject to federal and state health care information privacy and security laws, including, for example, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA).

Specific privacy or security concerns of members may be addressed to Group Health Customer Service at 1-888-901-4636.