

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the difference between HIO and HIE?

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| <p><b>Health information exchange</b><br/>(HIE; verb)</p>     | <p>is the ability to electronically move health information among disparate health care information systems according to nationally recognized standards while maintaining the integrity of the information being exchanged.</p>  |
| <p><b>Health information organization</b><br/>(HIO; noun)</p> | <p>is an organization that facilitates, oversees, and governs HIE activities (i.e., the movement of data) among a specific group of health care organizations. HIOs are also increasingly sharing non-clinical data and sometimes share data with non-clinical providers.</p> |

These terms are often used interchangeably (as are terms such as health information network, health data utility, and others).

### What are QHIOs?

A **qualified health information organization (QHIO)** is a state designated data exchange intermediary that facilitates the exchange of health and social services information between Data Exchange Framework (DxF) participants. A DxF participant may choose to use a QHIO to meet DxF requirements for secure data exchange.



### What will QHIOs do?

QHIOs will support DxF participants in the bi-directional exchange of health and social service information. They will send and receive transactions, transmit alerts (i.e., notifications of admissions and discharges from hospitals and emergency departments), conduct person matching, and have a governance structure that responsibly serves DxF participants. To facilitate broader statewide data exchange, QHIOs will also share data with each other and nationwide networks.

### Why would my organization use a QHIO?

While using a QHIO is not mandatory, it does have benefits. For one, the state has pre-vetted the QHIO to ensure they meet DxF requirements, so you know that they can support your organization in DxF data sharing. If your organization chooses to meet DxF requirements using a “non-qualified” HIO or another electronic system (such as an EHR), more responsibility falls on you to ensure the third-party system can support DxF requirements. Using a QHIO also allows your organization to make one connection (i.e., your EHR or other electronic system would integrate with the QHIO) rather than numerous point to point connections (i.e., your EHR or other electronic system would individually connect to each DxF participant you exchange data with).

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### What are key questions to consider about joining a QHIO?

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| Cost                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the costs associated with onboarding, integrating with your organization's existing EHRs/other electronic systems, ongoing subscription fees, upgrading any features, etc.?</li> </ul> |
| Onboarding Support      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the vendor support onboarding? What resources does it provide?</li> <li>What is the timeline for onboarding?</li> </ul>  |
| Functionality           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beyond DxF requirements, what other services can the QHIO provide?</li> <li>Can the QHIO support your organization's priority use cases?</li> </ul>   |
| Geographic Presence     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What organizations are currently sharing data with the QHIO? Where are they located?</li> </ul>   |
| Managing Sensitive Data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How does the vendor support managing sensitive data (e.g., behavioral health information), taking client consent into account?</li> </ul>   |

### What are key questions to consider about your organization when deciding if you should join a QHIO?

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| Data               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will data from a QHIO benefit your clients/residents?</li> </ul>  |
| Current Technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the assets and gaps within your organization's current technology?</li> <li>What would be required for DxF compliance vs. the costs of onboarding to a QHIO?</li> </ul>  |
| Staff Maintenance  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource allocation: Who on your organization's staff will manage the QHIO connection? How much effort will that be?</li> <li>Privacy/compliance costs: Will your organization need to train more staff to use the new vendor? What support does the vendor provide?</li> </ul> |

### Who are the QHIOs?

The following nine organizations have been designated as QHIOs:

- [Coveza](#)
- [Health Gorilla, Inc.](#)
- [Long Health, Inc.](#)
- [Los Angeles Network for Enhanced Services \(LANES\)](#)
- [Manifest MedEx](#)
- [Orange County Partners in Health-Health Information Exchange \(OCPH-HIE\)](#)
- [SacValley MedShare](#)
- [San Diego Health Connect](#)
- [Serving Communities Health Information Organization \(SCHIO\)](#)



### Where can I learn more?

Information on QHIOs can be found in the [QHIO Press Release](#), this [QHIO infographic](#), the [QHIO Policy & Procedure](#), and the [QHIO Application](#). More information on the Data Exchange Framework can be found on the [LeadingAge California website](#).