

# Provider Communication: Culture and HIE – Impact on patient care



Health  
Choice

## Why Your Role in HIE Matters

*Your voice matters. When you explain HIE with care and cultural awareness, you help patients feel safe, respected, and empowered to make the best choices for their health.*

Health Information Exchange (HIE) helps doctors, hospitals, and health plans like Blue Cross® Blue Shield® of Arizona Health Choice share patient health records securely. This makes care safer, faster, and more connected. It allows for streamlined diagnosis and decision-making. Arizona's HIE is run by Contexture, which follows strong security standards (HITRUST certified). Federal and state laws protect patient privacy.

But technology alone isn't enough—culture matters. Patients are more likely to participate in HIE when they feel that their culture is respected and trust the people involved.

**Cultural background: Risk perception and trust.** People from communities with histories of discrimination, surveillance, or immigration enforcement may be more wary of electronic records and data sharing. Cultural norms about privacy, family roles, and who should make health decisions also change how patients view who "should" see their information.

**Language and health literacy: Communication and understanding.** English proficiency or low health literacy can make technical safeguards and consent options feel unclear, increasing suspicion and reluctance to participate.

**Group vs. individual: Autonomy and decision-making.** In some cultures, health decisions are family- or community-centered; sharing data with a broad care team may be acceptable or even expected. In others, individual autonomy and confidentiality are paramount, so broad access raises concerns.

**Trust: Systems and experience.** Trust in local providers, health systems, and government influences acceptance of electronic systems. Where institutions are trusted, people are more likely to accept HIE; where institutions have failed communities, uptake is lower. They may be more familiar with a government that forces compliance and may not realize that they have choice and control.

Situation	Mitigating Response
<b>Mistrust from historical harms can lead to refusal</b>	Mitigate by partnering with trusted community leaders and using translated, culturally tailored materials
<b>Miscommunication can create fear</b>	Mitigate with teachback, plain language, interpreters, and visual aids
<b>One-size-fits-all policies can backfire</b>	Offer granular consent where possible and explain legal protections and oversight to reassure patients. Share examples of how information is used