

**Question:**

Electronic Health Information technology is transforming the delivery of health care. Employers, health care organizations and insurance companies are now offering personal health records (PHR) to people. What is a PHR?

**Answer:**

There are several definitions, but generally, a PHR is a computerized application that stores an individual's personal health information and typically initiated and maintained by an individual. A PHR can contain a diverse range of data such as:

- \* Allergies and adverse drug reactions,
- \* Medication (including dose and how often taken),
- \* Over the counter medications and herbal remedies,
- \* Illnesses and hospitalizations,
- \* Surgeries and other procedures,
- \* Vaccinations,
- \* Laboratory test results and family history.

One of the benefits of a PHR is that it provides added-value services such as drug-drug interaction or electronic messaging between patients and providers.

To learn more:

1. AHIMA e-HIM Personal Health Record Work Group. Practice brief. The role of the personal health record in the EHR. J AHIMA. Jul 2005. 76(7); 64A-64D. Medline
2. A Guide to understanding a PHR
3. CMS Testing Use of Claims Data to populate Personal Health Records  
Medicare Testing Beneficiary Use of Personal Health Records Press Release  
Frequently Asked Questions