

# FACTS ABOUT HEALTH RECORD BANKS



**With scattered paper medical records, patients often have to pull this information from several sources to track and coordinate their care. Washington State will soon offer Health Record Bank “accounts” in select communities to provide consumers access to copies of their medical records.**

## Scattered Records

With paper medical records scattered throughout the health care system, often tests are duplicated and providers act on incomplete information. This lack of information can contribute to errors and adverse outcomes, and patients are on their own when it comes to coordinating their care.

## Electronic Medical Records

Electronic medical records (EMRs) address some of these issues. They allow health care providers to transfer health information at the click of a button and offer more security than paper records because an audit trail or “footprint” is created to identify who accessed information and when.

But successfully sharing health information is harder than it sounds. Not all doctors have EMRs, particularly doctors in smaller offices. Also, as multiple vendors develop many kinds of EMR software; these systems often end up unable to “talk” to each other.

## Who Manages Data Access?

Another issue is determining who can access this data. Should any doctor be able to access it? What about hospitals or insurance companies? And who should make these decisions?

Many places are trying to figure out how to share patient information. The Washington State Health Record Bank (HRB) project addresses the fundamental question of who should manage and grant access to copies of this data by placing this power directly in the hands of the health care consumer.

## Proof of Concept

Working with several Washington communities, the HCA is undertaking a “proof of concept” (pilot) of a patient managed health record bank account. Once a consumer creates an HRB account, it will be populated with copies of key health information like prescriptions, allergies, lab results and immunizations from providers’ records or other institutions that have this information.

## Managed by consumers

Consumers can access, verify and add information to help manage their own care and can decide who can use or view their data. For instance, your HRB account will have access controls to designate which family members, providers or care givers may access your records if you become ill. Consumers can then become active, better informed and engaged partners in their own care.

More complete information can help provide better care and make the visit more productive for you and the provider. HRBs will also be able to securely accept and transmit information in more standardized formats. With more information, consumers and those engaged in their care can make more informed decisions, avoid duplication of services, reduce errors and improve patient safety as well as care quality.

## Health Record Banking

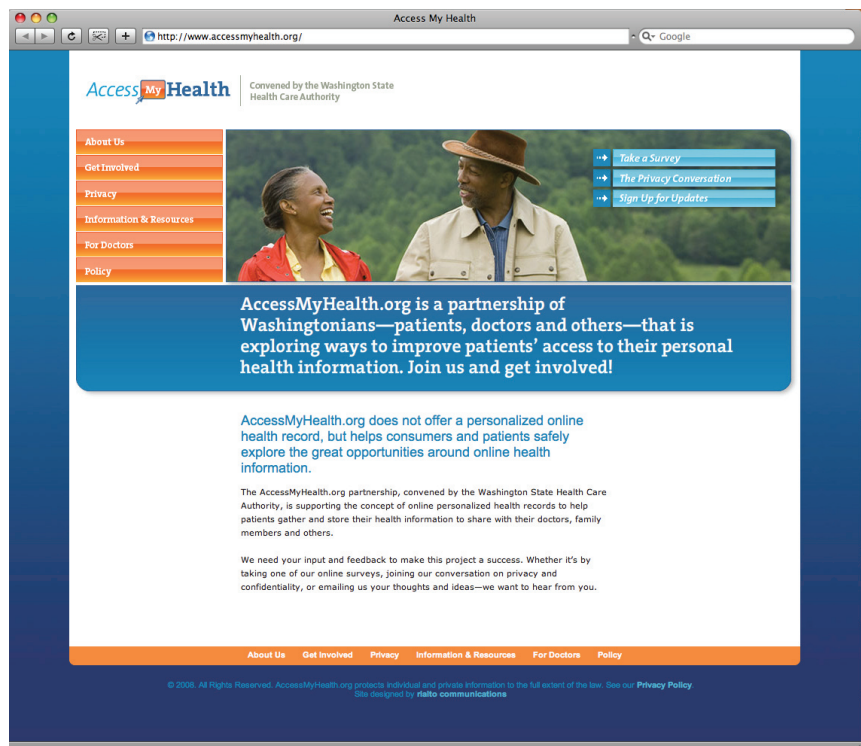
The first health record banks will be operational in three Washington communities in early 2009. These pilot sites will be in Bellingham, Wenatchee and Spokane.

This unique approach health record bank approach to engage and activate consumers and providers has been drawing national attention. Washington State is proud to help be a visionary leader in driving an approach that puts the consumer at the center of efforts to help reshape the health care system.

## Consumer Education

To educate consumers and get their input on HRB issues, the HCA works with a partnership of patients, doctors, and others who have created a web site called [www.AccessMyHealth.org](http://www.AccessMyHealth.org).

Visit this Web site and let us know what you want and expect from a HRB by completing the online surveys. Progress reports, survey results and other information on what we've learned about consumer preferences, concerns, and other HRB issues will be posted periodically on this site.



[www.AccessMyHealth.org](http://www.AccessMyHealth.org)

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