



NC HealthConnex Connection Extension Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the criteria for applying for an extension?

A. Participants who are in the queue to connect and are moving forward in the technical process, will automatically receive an extension and remain in compliance. New participants who are mandated to connect by June 1, 2019, will automatically receive an extension if they are still in the queue to connect on their deadline.

The participant must:

- ✓ Remain responsive with the NC HealthConnex technical team and continue to move forward in the connection process. The extension is not a waiver, but simply an extended period of time to finish the connection build.
- ✓ Have a signed an NC HIEA Participation Agreement, available here: <https://hiea.nc.gov/providers/how-connect>
- ✓ Demonstrate how your organization plans to connect to NC HealthConnex within one calendar year. This includes plans to obtain an Electronic Health Record (EHR), technological upgrades, etc.

•All health care providers must connect to NC HealthConnex by June 1, 2020, as required by law, so no extension deadlines will be set beyond June 1, 2020.

•This process is not a request for a waiver/exemption from the state's requirements, but an extension of time to meet the state's requirements. It simply allows more time for the technical onboarding to occur to be in compliance with the HIE Act.

Q. If we are granted an extension, what will be our new deadline?

A. Extensions will last until the next connection deadline date provided by law (June 1, 2019 for providers included in the June 1, 2018 deadline), or by June 1, 2020, whichever occurs first.

Q. Can we be granted an extension more than once?

A. Yes. Your organization may be granted additional extensions if you are unable to connect to NC HealthConnex by your extended deadline. All health care providers must connect to NC HealthConnex by June 1, 2020, as required by law, so no extension deadlines will be set beyond June 1, 2020.

Q. If we have started the connection process with NC HealthConnex and are on hold due to our EHR or other technical reasons, do we still need to request an extension?

A. Yes. The NC HIEA will grant extensions to any participants who have signed participation agreements and are actively working towards building a connection to NC HealthConnex. Please keep in regular contact with the SAS technical team to ensure your organization gets connected as soon as possible. You may also email the HIEA Provider Relations team at hiea@nc.gov to inquire about your status.

Q. I don't have an EHR, am I exempt from the law?

A. No. Providers who have not yet acquired an electronic health/medical record (EHR/EMR) for their practice have been given until June 1, 2019 to connect to NC HealthConnex. The process of selecting



and implementing an EHR can take between 12-18 months, so you should begin that process as soon as possible.

Q. I am a health care provider who does not collect clinical information from my patients. Am I exempt from the law?

A. No. However, the NC General Assembly directed the NC HIEA, in partnership with DHHS and State Health Plan, to conduct a feasibility study to understand the type of providers impacted by the HIE Act, the data collected and how it could be used in the HIE for patient care, as well as alternative methods of connection and data transport. The results of the study will be made available in April 2018.

Q. We have an electronic health record, but the integration and maintenance costs quoted by our EHR vendor is high. Should we apply for an extension?

A. Yes, you should apply for an extension. Also, the NC HIEA, in partnership with DHHS and State Health Plan, is conducting a feasibility study to research alternative methods of connection and data transport. The results of the study will be made available in April 2018.

Q. Who will decide if my practice is granted an extension?

A. The NC Health Information Exchange Authority (NC HIEA) will make a preliminary decision on approval based on:

- ✓ The provider's deadline
- ✓ If they have signed a Participation Agreement (PA) to enable the connection to NC HealthConnex
- ✓ If they have included a statement on how they plan to connect to NC HealthConnex

The NC HIEA will send the form and the proposed decision to a designated DHHS staff member, who will weigh in on the proposed decision. The NC HIEA will then make a final decision based on input from DHHS within 30 days of the request.