



Protocol for Using First 5 Alameda County Authorizations

First 5 Alameda County has two main authorization forms: the Authorization for Services (AFS) and the Authorization for Release and Exchange of Information (AREI).

The First 5 Alameda County Authorization for Services (AFS):

1. Outlines services the client/parent/caretaker will receive
2. Offers an opt-out section with listed ECChange and Pathways users (all of whom are considered health care providers) to allow “minimum necessary” sharing of client information for coordination of services
3. Outlines the basic stipulations and limitations of the authorization form
4. Provides information to clients about how to obtain additional copies of the authorization form and how to alter or withdraw authorization
5. Serves as a receipt for the provision of the HIPAA Notice of Privacy Practices

The **First 5 Alameda County Authorization for Release and Exchange of Information (AREI)** is used when client specific information will be shared, for the purpose of coordination of services:

1. Between a non-health care provider and health care provider
2. With any provider if the information to be shared involves a client’s (or parent/caregiver’s) HIV, mental health and substance use diagnosis and treatment information
3. With health care providers who are not listed on the Authorization for Services

According to First 5 privacy protocol, HIV, substance use, mental health, alcohol and drug diagnosis and treatment information are specially protected categories which require the use of the AREI to share with any provider by any form of communication (written or oral).

Important reminders:

- Legally, a client’s consent is not required to share client information between health providers for the purpose of coordination of services. However, it is First 5 Alameda County’s policy to obtain authorization from families to share information.
- First 5 Alameda County recommends the use of the AREI to share diagnosis and/or treatment information regarding mental health, substance use or HIV with any provider.
- If your agency is listed on the second page of the AFS, you can share client information with the listed providers for the purpose of coordination of services, provided the family did not put a check next to your agency’s name. An AREI is not needed in this situation. This does not include sharing diagnosis and/or treatment information regarding mental health, substance use or HIV.
- If a client did check an agency, or all agencies, listed on the opt-out section of the AFS, an AREI is required to share client information with other providers.
- In all cases, remember the “minimum necessary” HIPAA rule
- Sharing information includes any form of communication: written and oral