

Client Consent for ARIES Data Collection & Sharing

What is ARIES? AIDS Regional Information and Evaluation System (ARIES) is a data management program used by the state of Texas. The purpose of ARIES is to improve services for clients with HIV by helping providers collect and report client data.

We are required to provide reports about client services to the state. ARIES is used to collect and report information on services, while protecting client confidentiality. ARIES uses many security measures to protect client data. Agency staff must be given permission to access client information. This helps to make sure information you give is protected and only available to approved staff.

By agreeing to share your information with other HIV/AIDS service providers, you will save valuable time in getting the services you need. This means if you move or go to another AIDS service provider, you will not have to repeat the same information.

You do not have to share your personal information. But, this will mean that you have to spend more time with each agency giving them your information. Even if you don't share your information, it will still be sent to state and federal agencies as required by law.

Please read below and indicate your preference:

I understand that personal information, including but not limited to my HIV status and services I receive while a client, are recorded in a protected database called ARIES as required by the Texas Department of State Health Services. I also understand that I have the choice to share or not share this information with other HIV/AIDS services organizations.

My signature below indicates that the above information has been explained to me and I have shown my choice to share or not share my information by checking the appropriate box. It has also been explained to me and I understand that I may remove this authorization at any time. I have been provided with a list of what types of information will be shared and understand that counseling notes including psychiatric, mental health, substance abuse and legal progress notes will **not** be shared with anyone but those personnel who are providing those services.

I agree to have my information: **SHARED** **NOT SHARED**

Client Signature

Date

Client's Printed Name

Signature of Individual or Legally Authorized Representative

Date

Agency Representative or Witness

Date

Agency Name

More Information About ARIES

What does ARIES do? ARIES centralizes client data, service details, and agency and staff information to improve the quality of care and services to clients in need.

Who do you report this information to? All AIDS service organizations are required to provide reports about services to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HRSA), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Program, the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), and other administrative agencies, such as the Brazos Valley Council of Governments (BVCOG).

Is ARIES something new? Not really. For years the state has been using a program called COMPIS. The program is very old and simply cannot keep up with the demands of our ever-changing service delivery system. ARIES is replacing the COMPIS system now in place and will result in better information gathering and service delivery.

What does this mean to me? The biggest change is the amount of time to be saved in registration at different organizations you need to receive services from. By sharing information, you need only provide this information once. **However**, all service organizations require hard copies of your letter of diagnosis and proof of residency and income.

Does this mean everyone can see my private information? No! General demographic information like your name, address, and phone number is available to be seen by other agencies but only if you agree to share your information. Only those employees that sign a confidentiality agreement will be able to use the system.

Do I have to share my information?

No, you do not have to share information. However, the biggest benefit to you in sharing information is the time saved by not having to repeatedly go through a lengthy intake process at all organizations you access for services that are funded by the state. Eligibility documents such as letter of diagnosis and proof of residency and income will still need to be provided at every service organization you go to; however, if you receive case management services, your case manager can provide these to other organizations with your permission.

Are there any other benefits? Yes. Yearly updates will be as simple as a five-minute process. Once your income and address are confirmed and updated, it's done for every organization you use for HIV services.

What kind of information will be shared in ARIES? Information that will be shared includes contact information, demographic information (name, race, address, etc.), medical care, laboratory results, substance abuse diagnosis, and treatment plan information, non-medical service plans and assessments, HIV/AIDS test results, non-medical progress notes, and financial information. ***Counseling notes including psychiatric, mental health and substance abuse and legal progress notes will not be shared.*** Information will be available to agencies providing you services, the state, and other administrative agencies. If you begin receiving services at a new agency and they enter you as a client, the agency will then be able to see your information – but your information will not be available to them before that time.

Is this something only this agency is doing? No. This program is being used across the state of Texas.

So this is just something “they” decided to do, without thinking about clients like me?

From the moment this idea became a project, the state had clients involved. They have watched the state develop, test, and implement this project every step of the way to make sure your trust is protected.

What if I have a problem or a complaint? There are standard complaint systems in place at every funded agency. You may file a grievance without fear or bullying. If you ask for the complaint policy and cannot get it, call 979-595-2800 and ask for the HIV Program.