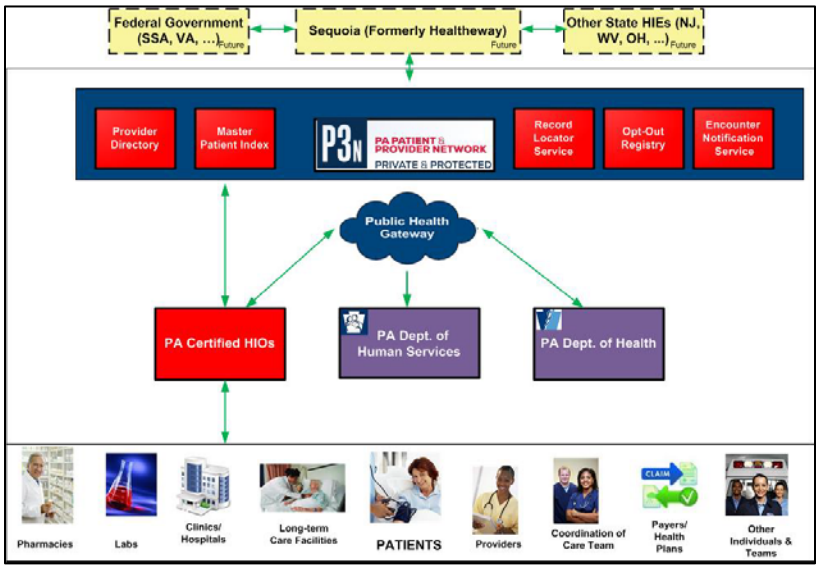
Fact Sheet: *Super-Protected Data*

The Pennsylvania eHealth Partnership

The **Pennsylvania eHealth Partnership (PA eHealth)** is enabled by Act 76 of 2016. Its purpose is to improve healthcare through secure electronic health information exchange (eHIE) among healthcare organizations. Benefits of eHIE include:

- Better coordination of care
- Faster access to clinical results
- Reduced redundancy of medical tests
- Improved patient safety and healthcare quality
- Expanded public health monitoring and tracking
- Improved population health

PA eHealth implemented the **Pennsylvania Patient & Provider Network, or P3N**, to enable eHIE in Pennsylvania—through the connection of healthcare providers to regional health information organizations (HIO), and the connection of the HIOs to the P3N.



Super-Protected Data

The federal **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)** allows states to extend additional privacy protections to health information. A state that does this is known as a **HIPAA-plus** state.

In Pennsylvania, HIPAA-plus health information protected by state law is known as **super-protected data, or SPD**. Pennsylvania law provides HIPAA-plus protection to three classes of SPD:

- Mental health diagnosis and treatment
- HIV/AIDS status and treatment
- Drug and alcohol treatment

SPD and eHIE: Challenges

SPD is frequently present in the text fields of electronic health records, such as medication lists and discharge summaries. With current electronic health records software, it is difficult to identify and separate SPD from the complete medical record.