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Sunshine Health Connect Joins Florida's Health Information Exchange

- Local Health Information Exchange adds three hospitals to growing network -

Tallahassee, FL– The Agency for Health Care Administration (Agency) announced today that Tampa Bay Health Information Exchange (Tampa Bay HIE) has joined over 400 other hospitals and health care providers as a member of the Florida's Health Information Exchange (Florida HIE).

Tampa Bay HIE, operating as Sunshine Health Connect, is adding Tampa General Hospital, All Children's Hospital, and Moffitt Cancer Center to the growing community of participants in the Patient Look-up, or PLU, service. The PLU service enables health care organizations and their affiliated users to query medical records through a secure connection, given prior consent by the patient or their designated representative.

The Florida HIE links a series of regional networks, or "nodes," to a larger statewide network. Patient data is stored on secure local servers owned by individual nodes, but is also accessible to members of the PLU service who have the proper authorization from the patient. This structure provides members with the security of local control and the utility of a statewide exchange. Participants are also able to share information with authorized users across the country through the federal eHealth Exchange. Currently, there are 55 hospitals, 342 clinics, and 34 post-acute care providers signed up to the service with more expected to come online over the next few months.

The secure exchange of patient information between health care entities allows providers to maintain continuity of care and improve coordination. For example, a primary care provider can request information on a patient's recent visit to the emergency department at a local hospital. This mitigates the risk of prescribing treatments when there is incomplete patient history and reduces duplicate procedures.

"The Tampa Bay HIE is excited about Sunshine Health Connect-HIE joining with other health care partners throughout Florida to improve patient care," said Peter Hobson, CEO, Sunshine Health Connect. "Our commitment to better health care goes beyond connecting hospitals to the Florida HIE by also assisting individual providers in participating."

"On behalf of the Agency, I want to commend Tampa Bay HIE, and all the providers that have signed up to the network, on their commitment to health information technology as a means to providing better health care," said Liz Dudek, Secretary for the Agency for Health Care Administration. "By joining the Patient Look-Up service, providers are acknowledging the important role the safe and effective exchange of patient data has to play in improving quality of care."

"We are excited by the continued expansion of the Patient Look-Up network, which enhances the ability of all participants to effectively use electronic health record technology to improve patient outcomes," said Nikole Helvey, Bureau Chief, Florida Center for Health Information Policy and Analysis.



Health care facilities currently using the service include: Atlantic Coast HIE, Bethesda Health, Broward Health, Florida Hospital/Adventist Health System, Martin Health System, Orlando Health, Senior Home Care – an affiliate of Kindred at Home, Strategic Health Intelligence, Tampa Bay HIE, and UF Health.

The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 45,000 health care facilities and 34 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at FloridaHealthFinder.gov. For more information about the health information exchange, please visit <http://www.fhin.net/> or <https://www.florida-hie.net>.

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