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September 4, 2014

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MetroChicago HIE Goes Live, Announces Collaboration with Illinois Health Information Exchange Authority's Efforts

Increased Access to Information Enhances Patient Experience, Improves Quality

CHICAGO – In a move that will ultimately enhance quality of care and reduce costs for patients and health care organizations, the MetroChicago Health Information Exchange (HIE) announced today that its first group of participating providers has gone live with the records-sharing technology. The 31 hospitals, including five hospital systems, represent nearly one-third of the market's net patient revenue and more than one-half of the market's physicians. These hospitals and their affiliated clinics and providers are now exchanging secure information using the service.

An initiative of the MCHC - Chicago Hospital Council, MetroChicago HIE enables authorized hospitals, health systems and other providers to securely share patient health information and access real-time updates. Availability of more accurate, up-to-date patient records allows providers to deliver the highest quality of care by, for example, avoiding duplicate or unnecessary tests and procedures.

"When lives are on the line, there is little room for guesswork," said Daniel Yunker, Senior Vice President of MCHC. "Connecting health care providers in this way permits caregivers immediate access to more critical patient information, allowing them to make efficient treatment decisions, thereby improving quality and reducing cost."

Added Yunker, "Every day, Chicago area hospitals make significant investments aimed at delivering the best care experience to their communities. This committed group is rapidly evolving into one of the nation's largest HIEs, reaching this major milestone in record time."

Sharing this quantity of data empowers providers to build meaningful relationships with the patients they serve and leads to enhanced outcomes, improved efficiency, curbed readmission rates and lower costs for all patients and providers. Real-time updates and alerts allow for enhanced treatment in response to time-sensitive conditions.

The successful launch of MetroChicago HIE's first group includes connectivity to a nationwide health records network that serves over 5,000 health care organizations and over 200,000 individual users, an important resource for local patients who may need care while away from the Chicago area.

“Not only does this technology help our team best serve our primary care patients, the capabilities enable them to make split-second decisions in an emergency or when dealing with a patient from outside the local area,” said John Norenberg, Vice President of Information Systems and Physician Services at Advocate Health Care, and Chair of the MetroChicago Health Information Exchange Advisory Council. “Having immediate access to the full picture allows our providers to create the best treatment plan regardless of the circumstance, giving peace of mind to patients and their families whether they see us regularly or not.”

The platform, designed and implemented by Sandlot Solutions, is user-friendly and has shown in other markets to be an effective tool at improving care coordination among hospitals and doctors. In order to protect privacy rights of patients included in the program, any patient information exchanged among entities must and does comply with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

“Overall, going live with these other hospitals and health systems is a tremendous opportunity to enhance quality of care and increase cost-effectiveness for patients in the region and for our organization,” said David Lundal, Chief Information Officer at Presence Health. “We are pleased to be a part of the first group implementing this innovative service, and I look forward to the continued opportunities as other providers in the metro area come online.”

While MetroChicago HIE focuses primarily on the northeast region of the state, the program is collaborating with the Illinois Health Information Exchange Authority’s (IHIEA) efforts to connect regional HIEs in Illinois and in surrounding states, and to connect to national networks as part of a broad solution that fully integrates the healthcare industry.

“We are thrilled to see this progress in support of high-quality and effectively coordinated patient care,” said Laura Zaremba, Health Data and Technology Director for the Illinois Governor’s Office of Health Innovation and Transformation. “The secure, electronic exchange of health information is a key component of Governor Quinn’s agenda for health system transformation in Illinois and the Alliance for Health Statewide Innovation Plan, in which many MetroChicago HIE hospitals are participating.”

On coordination with IHIEA, Yunker sees promise for the implications in the future of health care delivery. “These connections are a tangible step toward the ultimate goal of benefitting consumers throughout Illinois, and they represent a critical component of the evolving models of care that are transforming our nation’s health care system.”

For more information on MetroChicago HIE, please [click here](#).

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*The **Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council** is a membership and service association comprising more than 170 hospitals and health care organizations working together, since 1935, to improve the delivery of health care services in the greater metropolitan Chicago area. For more information, visit www.mchc.org.*

This release was originally distributed by the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council. Click [here](#) to view the release from the MCHC website.