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Clinician-to-Clinician Direct Messaging Now Live in New York State

Albany Medical Center to utilize HIXNY for Direct Messaging services as part of the Statewide Health Information Network of New York

New York, NY (February 26, 2013) - The [New York eHealth Collaborative](#) (NYeC) and [Healthcare Information Xchange of New York](#) (HIXNY) today announced the ability to offer Direct Messaging between clinicians as part of the [Statewide Health Information Network of New York](#) (SHIN-NY). Direct Messaging allows clinicians the ability to securely and seamlessly exchange authenticated, encrypted clinical data with one another.

Albany Medical Center will become the first healthcare provider in New York State to utilize Direct Messaging. The service is being enabled through HIXNY, which serves the Capital District and Northern New York as the regional health information exchange (HIE).

“HIXNY is an important and necessary element in providing more coordinated care within our community. The ability of individual clinicians to selectively exchange patient information when sharing the responsibility for providing care to an individual is also crucial to providing high-quality, efficient care,” said Fred Venditti, MD, Vice Dean for Clinical Affairs, Albany Medical Center and head of the Center’s physician faculty practice.

“The consultation process is an example of the need for this selective information exchange,” continued Dr. Venditti. “A primary care provider can send to a consultant the relevant clinical data to initiate a referral. The consultant can send the completed consultation note with the important clinical data created as part of the evaluation directly back to the PCP. Direct Messaging provides a next generation clinician-centric way to electronically exchange patient information by and ‘directly’ between clinicians’ EHRs.”

“We are thrilled to be collaborating with Albany Medical Center and in turn the New York eHealth Collaborative on this critically important initiative for our region and state,” said HIXNY CEO Mark McKinney. “As one of the busiest trauma centers in Upstate New York, HIXNY already provides Albany Medical Center fast and potentially life-saving patient histories in the emergency room.”

Direct Messaging gives providers an additional tool to coordinate patient care. It complements other HIXNY services, such as enabling providers to access patients’ community health records in their EHRs and receiving discharge summaries, imaging and lab results. To date, HIXNY has powered the exchange of more than 1.4 million medical summary documents for 3,500 connected providers at 200 practice locations.

“HIXNY is putting current and actionable information into providers’ workflows, enhancing the care being provided to patients throughout the region,” McKinney said. “Direct Messaging is just another way for us to allow physicians to access this data.”

Developed according to the Office of the National Coordinator’s (ONC) Direct Project guidelines and the NYeC-led EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup (IWG) specifications, Direct Messaging integrates into providers’ EHRs and existing workflows, enhancing their ability to electronically coordinate and improve the delivery of care to patients. All EHR vendors to provide Direct Messaging solutions in New York will be required to go through the testing program that the IWG has formed with CCHIT (Certification Commission for Health Information Technology). This will ensure that Direct Messaging tools integrate into a provider’s workflow. The testing program will be open for vendors in Spring 2013.

“Today’s announcement is important for New Yorkers as it marks the deployment of simple, secure messaging that enhances connectivity and targeted care coordination among participants in HIXNY,” said Dr. Farzad Mostashari, National Coordinator for Health Information Technology at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “This milestone allows providers to reach beyond the borders of existing regional exchanges, and even beyond state lines. The SHIN-NY Direct solution is a critical component for eligible providers to achieve Stage 2 meaningful use in New York while enabling a simple point-to-point exchange of patient health data.”

“With HIXNY being the first of the RHIO networks, and Albany Medical Center being the first major provider to enable Direct Messaging, this represents a significant step in reaching our state’s goal of full connectivity and brings us closer to further enabling and improving quality, coordinated care,” said Rachel Block, Deputy Commissioner for Health Information Technology Transformation in the New York State Department of Health.

The SHIN-NY is a secure network for sharing clinical patient data across New York State via Regional Health Information Organizations (RHIOs), such as HIXNY. The SHIN-NY is coordinated by NYeC in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health, and the state’s 11 RHIOs. In addition to Direct Messaging, the SHIN-NY’s other main capability is Patient Record Look-Up, which functions like a highly secure search engine, allowing healthcare providers to retrieve individual patient records from across the network after receiving consent from the patient.

“SHIN-NY’s Direct Messaging is now available and will greatly improve the ability of clinicians across the state to exchange records as they coordinate a patient’s care,” said David Whitlinger, Executive Director at NYeC. “In the coming months, we look forward to a majority of the electronic health record products

that are used in New York becoming certified, with the SHIN-NY's Direct Messaging service enabling widespread record exchange."

About The New York eHealth Collaborative (NYeC): NYeC is a not-for-profit organization, working in partnership with the New York State Department of Health to improve healthcare for all New Yorkers through health information technology (health IT). Founded in 2006 by healthcare leaders, NYeC receives funding from state and federal grants to serve as the focal point for health IT in the State of New York. NYeC works to develop policies and standards, to assist healthcare providers in making the shift to electronic health records, and to coordinate the creation of the [Statewide Health Information Network of New York](#) (SHIN-NY), a network to connect healthcare providers statewide. For more information about NYeC, visit www.nyehealth.org and [@NYeHealth](#).

About Healthcare Information Xchange of New York (HIXNY): HIXNY ("hix-knee"), the Healthcare Information Xchange of New York, is a not-for-profit collaborative of health plans, hospitals, physician practices, and other healthcare entities working together to enable secure access and electronic exchange of medical information to coordinate quality care, improve patient safety and reduce healthcare costs. HIXNY operates the health information exchange for a 16 county region encompassing the Capital District and Northern New York and is a New York State Department of Health designated regional health information organization. To learn more about HIXNY, visit www.hixny.org, www.facebook.com/HIXNY or [@HIXNY](#).

About Albany Medical Center: Albany Medical Center, northeastern New York's only academic health sciences center, is one of the largest private employers in the Capital Region. It incorporates the 651-bed Albany Medical Center Hospital, which offers the widest range of medical and surgical services in the region, and the Albany Medical College, which trains the next generation of doctors, scientists and other healthcare professionals, and which also includes a biomedical research enterprise and the region's largest physicians practice with 350 doctors. Albany Medical Center works with dozens of community partners to improve the region's health and quality of life. For more information: www.amc.edu or www.facebook.com/albanymedicalcenter

About the EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup : The EHR/HIE Interoperability Workgroup is a New York eHealth Collaborative-led coalition of 19 States (representing 52% of the U.S. population), 20 electronic health record (EHR) vendors, and 22 health information exchange (HIE vendors). The workgroup was launched in February 2011 to leverage existing standards and develop consistent implementation guides for interoperability between HIE software platforms, and the applications that interface with them. For more information about the Workgroup, visit www.interopwg.org.

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