



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

Better Health Care for all Floridians

ELIZABETH DUDEK
SECRETARY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2013

Contact: AHCA Communications Office

AHCACommunications@ahca.myflorida.com, 850-412-3623

Florida's Direct Secure Messaging Service Connects with Alabama and Georgia

~Southeast states establish system to securely share information that leads to patient benefits~

Tallahassee, FL – The Florida Health Information Exchange's Direct Secure Messaging Service (DSM) is now connected with systems in Alabama and Georgia. Through this national standard connection, providers in each of the three states can send secure, encrypted messages across state lines to their colleagues who have registered for the service in their respective states. This patient-approved sharing of health information can further enhance care coordination and collaboration among providers.

"This connectivity with Alabama and Georgia is very important for residents who live near the state borders and may cross over from one state to another for health services," said Liz Dudek, Secretary of the Agency for Health Care Administration. "Interstate connections are also part of disaster preparedness, and the Agency will be promoting ways to leverage this benefit, especially with hurricane season approaching."

"It's important for neighboring states to be able to quickly communicate about a patient's treatment," said Sharon Hennessy, Assistant Director of North Central Early Steps, which serves Floridians along the Georgia border. "Operationally, I can see no compelling reason not to use DSM when quality patient care is our objective."

DSM was launched in 2011 and has been enabling care providers to safely communicate and share health information with other professionals involved in a patient's case. Unlike mail or FAX, DSM uses encryption to protect health information, so if a message is intercepted, it cannot be read or decoded.

"We're excited to have the ability to quickly share information about our patients that travel between providers in Alabama and Florida," said Connie Bednar, EHR Clinical Coordinator with Escambia Community Clinics, Inc. "DSM makes it easier for everyone to stay in the loop and maintain continuity of care."

DSM is free for Florida providers to use, and allows for streamlined, coordinated and secure communication of a patient's health information between multiple providers with patient consent. In addition, DSM is Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliant. The Florida Health Information Exchange has made connections among provider organizations throughout Florida. DSM participants currently include group practices, health clinics, county health departments, pharmacies and rural hospitals.



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 37 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at FloridaHealthFinder.gov. For more information about the health information exchange, visit www.AHCA.MyFlorida.com or <https://www.florida-hie.net>.

###